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GOOD AND EVIL
IN
F.M. DOSTOEVSKY AND D.S. MEREZHKOVSKY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Good and Evil in F. M. Dostoevsky and D. S. Merezhkovsky, submitted by Cathy Aberant in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the development of the concepts of good and evil from their manifestation in Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov, to their inclusion in Merezhkovsky's trilogy Christ and Antichrist.

In Dostoevsky's philosophical worldview the problems of good and evil revolved around such universal qualities as human freedom, individuality, dignity and suffering. Dostoevsky developed a unique system in which human will coupled with intellect developed into evil or manqodhood as opposed to the Christian concept of Godmanhood. Suffering served to redirect humanity from evil and manqodhood and preserved freedom and good embodied in Godmanhood.

By the time these concepts filtered down to Merezhkovsky they had lost their universality. Instead of focusing upon the general categories of freedom and individuality, Merezhkovsky sought to solve what he considered to be the conflict between Christianity and paganism, Christ and Antichrist which in his opinion were inextricably bound up with good and evil. In his religious philosophy Merezhkovsky endeavored to fuse together a synthesis of the components of these concepts. However, in the trilogy Merezhkovsky never succeeded at bringing about such a synthesis.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The Russian quotations in this thesis are transliterated in accordance with the system outlined in A Guide for the Writing of M.A. and Ph.D. Theses published by the Department of Slavic Languages, University of Alberta. In this thesis all transliterations from the old orthography are normalised into modern orthography. In documenting Russian names are represented according to the above transliteration system. Otherwise in the body of this thesis they are reproduced in accordance with conventional English usage.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> . . . nam prezhde vsego nado predvechnye voprosy razreshit', vot nasha zabota. Vsia molodaia Rossiia tol'ko liish' o vekovechnykh voprosakh teper' i tolkuet . . . . . Ved' russkie mal'chiki kak do sikh por oruduiut? Inye to est'? Vot, naprimer, sdeshnii voniuchii traktir, vot oni skhodiatsia, sasseli v ugol. Vsiu zhizn' prezhde ne znali drug druga, a vyidut iz traktira, sorok let opiat' ne budut znat' drug druga, nu i chto zh, o chem oni budut rassuzhdat', poka poimali minutku v traktire-to? O mirovykh voprosakh, ne inache: est' li bog, est' li bessmertie? . . . I muchaetsia, muchaetsia samykh original'nykh russkikh mal'chikov tol'ko i delaiut, chto o vekovechnykh voprosakh govoriat v nas v nashe vremia. Tsarstvo na tak?[1]

The above statement spoken by Ivan Karamazov in Dostoevsky's Brat'ia Karamazovy (The Brothers Karamazov) precedes the famous chapter entitled "Velikii inkvizitor" (The Grand Inquisitor).[2] In this tale, and surrounding discussions, Ivan himself puts forth 'universal' questions to consider the existence of God and immortality, freedom

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[1] F.M. Dostoevskii, Brat'ia Karamazovy in: Sobranie sochinenii, Vol. IX (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1956-58), Part 3, Book V, Chap. iii, pp. 292-93. Hereinafter cited in the body of the text and footnotes as B.K. Initial arabic numerals will refer to Part, large roman numerals to Book, small roman numerals to Chapter and the final arabic numerals to page.

[2] In the exposition of this thesis Russian titles will first be cited in the original followed by their translation in parentheses. Thereafter, except for purposes of documentation, the English translations will be used.

of choice and human suffering. Dostoevsky too envisioned these questions as the major ones which encompass the concepts of good and evil. These concepts underlie The Brothers Karamazov as well as a number of other novels by Dostoevsky.

The striking forcefulness with which Dostoevsky expressed "universal" questions permeated late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russian thought. The relentless inquiry into the absurdity in human existence, which formed the basis of Dostoevsky's writing, inspired the philosophical questions posed by many Russian philosophers and novelists at the turn of the century. Vyacheslav Ivanov, Lev Shestov, Vasily Rozanov, Nikolai Berdyaev and Dmitri Merezhkovsky established various societies and journals in which they examined the same problems which tormented Dostoevsky. Thus, the words spoken by Ivan Karamazov were also true some twenty or thirty years later when his Russian "boys" continued to discuss "universal" questions.[1]

Dostoevsky's own ideas began to develop in Zapiski iz podpol'ya (Notes From the Underground) written in 1864

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[1] In his study Donald Lowrie refers to Berdyaev and Dostoevsky in this connection. One reads: "From childhood, Berdyaev wrote, he remained the 'Russian boy' described by Dostoevsky - tormented with 'accursed questions'". See D. Lowrie, Religious Prophet (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1960), p. 201.

shortly after his return from penal servitude in Siberia.[4] Notes From the Underground served as a catalyst for his more mature novels, including Prestupleniie i nakazanie (Crime and Punishment--1866) and The Brothers Karamazov--1879-80. These two novels are concerned with crime, specifically murder. In them Dostoevsky's "universal" questions evolve into their most mature form.[5]

In Notes From the Underground Dostoevsky presents the problems of freedom of choice in the face of good and evil, and the human will in its relationship to suffering. The man from the underground rebels against the accepted forms of a socialist society prescribed by the European humanist movement. He cannot accept a "Weltanschauung" that establishes collective good and happiness based on materialism and on called enlightened self-interest as the ultimate goal towards which society should direct itself. 'Podpol'nyi cheloviek otvergaet ratsional'nuiu organizatsiiu sovershennoi garmonii i blagopoluchiia.'[6]

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[4] This is in line with Shestov's view that Dostoevsky's literary fiction falls into two periods. The second one marked by Zapiski iz podpol'ia began a new phase in the philosophical thought of the author. See L. Shestov, Dostoevskii i Nitsshe: filosofiia tragedii (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1971), p. 29 and 30. [illegible]

[5] Unfortunately Dostoevsky died in 1881 and thus never finished the second half of The Brothers Karamazov.

[6] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo (Prague: The YMCA Press Ltd, 1923), p. 68.

The underground man stubbornly demands to assert his own "stupid" will no matter what the consequences may be. To him, irrational freedom is more important than any other human concept. He claims that if and when the Crystal Palace,..a symbol of enslavement to material well being,' is established, at least one person will demand the right to express his will by rejecting it.

> Vot' ia, naprimer, nishkol'ko ne oblivlius'. esli vdrug ni o tupo'ni o eqo srodi vsechshchego budushchego blagorazumiia vsenikhot khoti-nibud' dohentl'men, o neblagorodnoi iili, luchshe skazat', o retrogradnoi i nasmeshlivoiu fizionomiei, zheret ruki v boki i skazhet nam vsem: a chto, gospoda, ne stolknut' li nam vse eto blagorazumie s odnogo raza, nuqui, prakhom odinatvenno s toiu tsel'iu, chtob vse eti logarifmy otpravilis' k chertu i chtob nam opiat' po vsemu stupat' tole, pozhit'.[1]

That force which preserves human personality and individuality is identified as the human will.

Human will also contributes to human suffering. Freedom to assert one's will in the face of good and evil

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[1] The Crystal Palace refers to N. Chernyshevsky's utopia developed in his novel Chto delat' (What is to be Done). Additionally in this connection Rozanov presents statements by Dostoevsky in which the degenerate state of European society is referred to as a crystal palace. See V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970), p. 18.

[2] F.M. Dostoevskii, Zapiski iz podpol'ia in: Sobranie sochinenii, Vol. IV, Part I, Chap. VII, p. 111. Hereinafter cited as Z.i.p. Large roman numerals refer to Book or Part, small roman numerals to Chapter and final arabic numerals to page. This convention, with appropriately abbreviated titles, will be followed for all fictional works cited in this study with the exception of B.B.

may lead to chaos and disorder. As a result suffering arises. Suffering, however, is not necessarily evil. It becomes a positive force in human existence. The underground man formulates this notion as follows:

> Ved', mozhet byt', cheloveK liubit ne odno blagodenstvie? Mozhet byt', on ravno nastol'ko zhe liubit stradanie? Mozhet' byt', stradanie-to emu ravno nastol'ko zhe i vyguodno, kak blagodenstvie? . . . A mezhdu tem ia uveren, chto chelovek ot nastoiashchego stradaniia, to est' ot razrusheniia i khaosa, sikogda ne otkazhetsia. Stradanie--da ved' eto edinstvennaia prichina sosnaniia. (P.i.P., 7, ix, 161)

In Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov Dostoevsky's dialectic is developed even further. Free will becomes that intangible quality which preserves man in God's image. However, as we have already observed, when freedom develops into arbitrary will, chaos and destruction soon follow. Will which results in chaos is occasioned by people who raise themselves to the level of God. Dostoevsky introduces the term man-god (chelovekо-bog). The man-god loses sight of the true God, Jesus Christ, the God-man.

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[9] In P.i.P., 5, xi, 139, Ivan's devil uses the term chelovekо-bog. He discusses with Ivan the attainment of humanity's goal. He states: 'Malo togo: eshi dazhe pozzhe etot i nibudia ne nastupit, no tak kak boga i bessmertia vse-taki net, to novym cheloveku pozvolitsia sdelat'sia chelovekо-bogom, dazhe khotia by odnomu v tselom mire, i, ssh konechno, s novym chuvstvom, s legkim serdtsem sbrosit' vsiakuiu prezhniuiu nravstvennuiu uzdechku, prezhnego raba cheloveka, esli ono ponadobitsia. Zdes' boga ne ustanovliaet zakona! Ne stanet bog--tam ssho net voli!

V. Zenkovsky says of the man-god: "Whoever rejects Godmanhood as a revelation about man--a creature who finds fullness in God--inevitably tends toward manhood."[10]

Dostoevsky presents an extremely perplexing dialectic. The resolution becomes fundamental to Dostoevsky's philosophy and it is God. Nikolai Berdiaev states:

> No on (Dostoevsky, C.A.) povedet cheloveka dal'neishimi putiami svoevoliia i bunta, chtoby otkryt', chto v svoevolii istrebliaetsia svoboda, v bunte otritsaetsia chelovek. Put' svobody vedet ili k chelovekobozhestvu i na etom puti chelovek nakhodit svoi konets i svoiu gibel', ili k Bogochelovechestvu i na etom puti nakhodit svoe spasenie i okonchatel'noe utverzhdenie svoego obraza. Chelovek est'bo i est', esli on obraz i podobie Bozhie, esli est' Bog. Esli net Boga, esli on sam bog, to net cheloveka, to poglibaet i ego obraz.[11]

Further, as Zenkovsky points out, moral corruption and evil are juxtaposed with good:

> Dostoevsky exhibits not only the sin, corruption, egoism and in general the "demonic" element in man. He exhibits no less profoundly the impulses toward justice and good in the human soul, the "angelic" principle in man.[12]

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[10] V. Zenkovsky, "Dostoevsky's Religious and Philosophical Views," in: Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by Rene Wellek (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 110.

[11] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, p. 31.

[12] V. Zenkovsky, "Dostoevsky's Religious and Philosophical Views," p. 111.

Bearing in mind the foregoing statements we shall now define the basic concepts of good and evil in Dostoevsky's terminology. The essence of humanity is characterized by freedom in the choice of good and evil. Freedom, however, may lead to arbitrary self-will, thus resulting in evil, corruption and the degeneration of moral principles. Only through suffering and faith may the individual perceive the good that exists in the world. Good is associated with humankind experiencing harmony through God's warmth and love. Faith in God links people to their divine origins and allows them to perceive the organic nature of universal life. This is brought out by Berdiaev in his following statements concerning freedom and its relationship to good and evil:

> K mirovoi garmonii chelovek dolzhen pritti cherez svobodu izbraniia, cherez svobodnoe preodolenie zla. Prinuditel'naia mirovaia garmoniia ne mozhet byt' opravdana i ne nuzhna, ne sootvetstvuet dostoinstvu synov Bozhiikh.[13]

As we already mentioned, Dostoevsky's handling of "universal" questions influenced the future generation of philosophers in Russia. Literature and philosophy of the turn of the century pulsated with vigor and energy. Proponents of a vibrant school of thought, the Renaissance

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[13] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, p. 161.

(renessans), hoped to revive former traditions.[14] This is seen in James Billington's following statement concerning the Renaissance.

> As with electricity so in culture it was a case of old sources for new power. Man had simply found new ways of unlocking the latent energy within the moving waters and combustible elements of tradition. Thus, the new, dynamic culture of this electric age was, in many ways, more solidly rooted in Russian tradition than the culture of the preceeding, aristocratic era.[15]

The main subject of investigation revolved around the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and the problems raised by these artist-thinkers. Berdiaev, a major figure of the movement says in Russkaia ideia (The Russian Idea): "Porazitel'nyi fakt. Tol'ko v nachale XX veka kritika po-nastoiashchemu otsenila velikuiu russkuiu literaturu XIX veka, predzhde vsego Dostoevskogo i L. Tostogo."[16] It is noteworthy that most members of the Renaissance admired Dostoevsky's philosophy and were dissatisfied with that of Tolstoy. This is evidenced in the vast majority of published essays and papers which include: Solovev's Tri rechi v pamiat' Dostoevskogo (Three Discourses in Memory

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[14]Berdiaev refers to the new movement as the Renaissance in: Russkaia ideia (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1946), p. 220.

[15]J. Billington, The Icon and the Axe (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 475.

[16]N. Berdiaev, Russkaia ideia, p. 221.

of Dostoevsky--1884); Merezhkovsky's Tolsoi i Dostoevskii (Tolstoy and Dostoevsky--1901-1902) in which he highly praises Dostoevsky's religious philosophy; Ivanov's Dostoevskii i roman - tragediia (Dostoevsky and the Novel - Tragedy--1916); Shestov's Dostoevskii i Nitshe: filosofiia tragedii (Dostoevsky and Nietzche; the Philosophy of Tragedy--1898) and "Kirkegaard i Dostoevskii" (Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky-- 1936); Berdiaev's Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo (Dostoevsky's Worldview--1923); and Rozanov's Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo (Dostoevsky and the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor--1894).[17]

The emotional and intellectual liason between Dostoevsky and his followers was so great that James Wernham, in his introduction to a discussion of Berdiaev and Shestov, states:

> The name of Dostoevsky appears in this essay as often, perhaps, as do the names of Berdiaev and Shestov, and what pretends to be a study of two Russian thinkers threatens almost throughout to become a study of three.[18]

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[17] It is interesting to note that Rozanov married Dostoevsky's former mistress, Apollinairia Suslova, in order to come as close as possible to an understanding of Dostoevsky's thoughts and feelings. This was indicative of Rozanov's generation's strong interest in Dostoevsky. See S. Roberts, "Afterward" to Rozanov's Dostoevsky and the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1967), pp. 213-14.

[18] J. Wernham, Two Russian Thinkers: Berdyaev and Shestov (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. xiii.

In Tri razgovora (Three Conversations - 1899) which includes "Kratkaia povest' ob antikhriste" (Tale of the Antichrist) Vladimir Solovev, a contemporary of Dostoevsky. depicted many tendencies set forth in "The Grand Inquisitor". "Tale of the Antichrist", permeated with an apocalyptic fervor, reflects the Grand Inquisitor's ideas concerning freedom and suffering. The Grand Inquisitor considers it his duty to sacrifice freedom and accept personal suffering for the sake of humankind's happiness. Solovev's inquisitor, as does Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, raises himself to the level of God. He too hopes to alleviate suffering. In this way he may guide human destiny. Solovev discusses his antagonist in the following words:

> Soznavaia v samom sebe velikuiu silu dukha, on byl vsegda ubezhdennym spiritualistom, i iasnyi um vsegda ukazyval emu istinu togo, vo chto dolzhno verit': dobro, Boga, Messiu. V èto on veril, no liubil on tol'ko odnogo sebia . . . Odnim slovom, on priznal sebia tem, chem v desitvitel'nosti byl Khristos.[19]

John, Ernst Paul and Pope Peter, the first a representative of Russian Orthodoxy, term Solovev's emperor "Antichrist". Berdiaev notes that in "Tale of the Antichrist" the orthodox John is the first to perceive Antichrist and in this way the holy tradition of Russian

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[19] V. Solovev, "Kratkaia povest' ob antikhriste" in: Tri razgovora (New York: Chekhov Publishing House of the East Europeon Fund, Inc., 1954), pp. 199-200.

Orthodoxy is perpetuated.[20] All three men refused to be reconciled to the Antichrist, the man-god. They pledge their love and faith in the only true God, represented by Jesus Christ. John is risen from the dead. Through this act he displays the power of a faith in God.

Members of the Renaissance seized upon both Dostoevsky's and Solovev's principle of the Antichrist and the message of the impending apocalypse. They fused these concepts into their own philosophies of good and evil. Berdiaev, Merezhkovsky and others met at Ivanov's apartment which became known as the Ivory Tower.[21] Here they laid the foundations for various journals: Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii (Questions of Philosophy and Psychology); Severny Vestnik (The Northern Messenger); Mir iskusstva (The World of Art); Novyi put' (The New Path); and Voprosy zhizni (Questions of Life).[22] In their discussions and in these journals they examined the problems of good and evil and transformed them into a dynamic philosophy. The principle of Antichrist which was intertwined with evil

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[20] See N. Berdiaev, Russkaia ideia, p. 180.

[21] D. Lowrie, Rebellious Prophet, p. 87.

[22] On this see C. Calian's, Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), p. 19.

came to mean denial of freedom of the spirit.[23]

Billington classifies three major tendencies of the Renaissance as Prometheanism, sensualism and apocalypticism.[24] His categories are indisputably accurate. In The Russian Idea Berdiaev identifies the cultural Renaissance not only with Christ, but also with Dionysus. He says:

> To byla epokha iskliuchitel'no talantlivaia, blestiashchaia. Bylo mnogo nadezhd, kotorye ne sbylis'. Renessans stoial ne tol'ko pod znakom Dukha, no i Dionisa. I v nem smeshalsia renessans khristianskii s renessansom iazycheskim.[25]

It is when we mention pagan elements fusing with Russian Orthodoxy that we encounter in particular the name of Dmitri Merezhkovsky. That Merezhkovsky was relevant to the Renaissance cannot be denied. Berdiaev expressed the importance of Merezhkovsky when he discussed the people who made their appearance at this time. "Takov, prezhde vsego, D. Merezhkovskii; on imeet nesomnennve zaslugi v otsenke Dostoevskogo i L. Tolstogo."[26]

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[23] Berdiaev brings out the spirit of Antichrist when he says: "On [Dostoevsky, C.A.] ne prinimaet iskusheniia prevrashcheniia kamnei v khleb, ne prinimaet resheniia problemy khelba cherez otrechenie ot svobody dukha. Antikhristovo nachalo dlia nego est' otrechenie ot svobody dukha." See N. Berdiaev, Russkaia ideia, p. 125.

[24] J. Billington, The Icon and the Axe, p. 478.

[25] N. Berdiaev, Russkaia ideia, p. 222.

[26] Ibid., p. 221.

Merezhkovsky in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky discusses the religious philosophies of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Here he puts forth the idea that European civilization is founded upon two conflicting historico-religious tendencies, paganism and Christianity.[27] He seizes upon statements in Dostoevsky's diaries. Therein Dostoevsky writes:

> Proizoshlo stolknovenie dvukh samykh protivopolozhnykh idei, kotorye tol'ko mogli sushchestvovat' na zemle: Chelovekobog vstretil Bogocheloveka, Apollon Bel'vederskii--Khrista.[28]

Merezhkovsky construes Dostoevsky's statement to mean that Russia must overcome the raging conflict between Christ and Antichrist. He formulates this theory in his discussion of Dostoevsky as follows:

> Na Zapade, to-est', v Evrope--"dukh ratnyi", na Vostoke, to-est' v Rossii--"dukh blagodatnyi" . . . govoria iazykom Dostoevskogo--Chelovekobog i Bogochelovek, Khristos i Antikhrist--vot dva protivopolozhnykh berega, dva kraia ètoi bezdny. I gore nashe ili schast'e v tom, chto u nas deistvitel'no "dve rodiny--nasha Rus' i Evropa", i my ne mozhem otrech'sia ni ot odnoi iz nikh: My dolzhny ili pogibnut', ili soediniat' v sebe oba kraia bezdny.[29]

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[27] Also see H. Trench's "Merejkowski" an introduction to Death of the Gods translated by Herbert Trench (London: Constable & Company Limited, 1926), pp. 7-8

[28] D. Merezhkovskii, Tolstoi i Dostoevskii in: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii, Vol. IX (Moscow: Sytin, 1914), p. xi.

[29] Ibid., p. x.

In Merezhkovsky's trilogy, Khristos i antikhrist (Christ and Antichrist), he attempts to resolve the conflict of Christianity and paganism. He endeavors to solve the problems of good and evil which Dostoevsky raised twenty years previously. He presents his own conception of Christ and Dionysus as the panacea for all problems encompassing good and evil, that is freedom and its relationship to will and suffering. Within his trilogy Merezhkovsky perpetuates the tradition of Dostoevsky in the novels Smert' bogov (Death of the Gods - 1896), Voskresshie bogi (Resurrection of the Gods - 1901), Khristos i antikhrist (Christ and Antichrist - 1905) and Antikhrist: Petr i Aleksei (Antichrist: Peter and Alexis - 1905). His driving force inspired other thinkers of this time, many of whom we have already mentioned. When we consider the following words of Andrey Bely we realize the potency of Merezhkovsky's works and the value of his contributions to the "universal" questions put forth by Russian "boys" at the turn of the century:

> "Liubov'", "Bog", "sobornost'", "molitva", "misteriia": -- eti slova proiznosiatsia nyne v kabakakh, i vot, kogda priglashaiut nas v khramy, my ulybaemsia: . . . Vse soborniki, mistiki, orgiasty, erotisty, erotomanstvuiushchie Khristiane, chulkisty lovko cherpali iz Merezhkovskogo; zdes' ego proshtempelevali, . . . a on ostaetsia samym soboi--tsel'nym, nezabyvaemym.[30]

Thus, Merezhkovsky comes to the forefront and highlights our understanding of good and evil presented in post-Dostoevsky Russian intellectual thought.

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[30] A. Bely, "Ne mir, no mech", Vesy, VI, No. 6 (1908), p. 54.

In the following study we shall examine Dostoevsky's novels, Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov, along with Merezhkovsky's trilogy, Christ and Antichrist. It is our intent to show the development of the treatment of the problems of good and evil in these works.

CHAPTER II

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Raskolnikov, the central figure of Crime and Punishment has an apocalyptic dream in which he envisions the world destined to destruction. Humanity is doomed because of a strange parasite originating in Asia. This organism, endowed with intelligence and will, infects peoples' bodies and leaves them possessed and insane. Once the parasite attacks, the victim is transformed. He suddenly considers himself to be extraordinarily rational and intelligent. Each individual deems his own logically deduced judgement to be perfect and thus sees himself as a paragon of wisdom. However, because every person values his own conviction as truth, he begins to lose sight of objective truth. Any consistent reality conceived by people as an organic entity becomes distorted. Chaos alone remains.

In the face of such confusion, people no longer understand the concepts of good and evil. They recognize only what they consider to be right and wrong and they stubbornly begin to assert their will. Because they cannot agree upon the proper regulation of society they begin to destroy each other. All previous "norms" cease to exercise their influence. The consequences of such discord is annihilation. The resulting plague soon spreads and envelopes all peoples. Unknown to the infected race of humankind, only a few people escape the disease. They are destined to save humanity from extinction, for they possess

the ability to begin a new life and a new breed of human beings.

This fantasy torments Raskolnikov for some time. Through it the reader is enabled better to understand Raskolnikov's character and the ethico-philosophical message crucial to this novel.

Raskolnikov, like many of Dostoevsky's characters is affected by the disease of self-will. Dostoevsky's characters often lose sight of God, give into their will, and engage in evil acts. Ivanov makes this connection in his discussion of Dostoevsky's characters:

> For as soon as the human soul despairs of God, it is irresistably drawn to chaos: it finds joy in all that is ugly and warped, and is greeted, from the deepest ravines of Sodom, by the smile of a beauty that seeks to rival the beauty of Our Lady.[1]

Raskolnikov, the murderer, rejects society for the sake of an intellectual theory. He surrenders himself to a life almost totally devoid of human relationships, i.e., he abandons his student milieu, and does not correspond with his family or his former acquaintances.

Raskolnikov retreats into the stifling atmosphere of Saint Petersburg which impinges upon his emotions. His "coffin-like" room is symbolic of his withdrawal. Saint

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[1] V. Ivanov, Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky, translated by Norman Cameron (New York: The Noonday Press, 1971), p. 32. This is a translation of Dostoevskii i roman tragediia which was unavailable in the original.

Petersburg, itself, founded upon reason and order by the will of Peter the Great, is seen as a city devoid of true feeling. It is a city in which the Russian soul has been torn from its very roots. This is brought out by Berdiaev when he says:

> Gorod Peterburg, kotoryi tak izumitel'no chuvstvoval i opisyval Dostoevskii, est' prizrak, porozhdennyi chelovekom v ego otshchepenstve i skital'chestve. V atmosfere tumanov etogo prizrachnogo goroda zarozhdaiutsia bezumnye mysli, sozrevaiut zamysly prestuplenii, v kotorykh prestupaiutsia granitsy chelovecheskoi prirody. Vse skontsentrirovano i sgushcheno vokrug cheloveka, otorvavshegosia ot bozhestvennykh pereosnov.[2]

In the midst of the distorted reality of Saint Petersburg Raskolnikov conceives an intellectual theory and dares to carry it out. Raskolnikov fits the type of character discussed by Berdiaev in the following statements:

> Dostoevskii osobenno zainteresovyvaetsia sud'boi cheloveka v tot moment, kogda on vosstal protiv ob"ektivnogo miroporiadka, otorvalsia ot prirody, ot organicheskikh kornei i ob"iavil svoevolie. Otshchepenets ot prirodnoi, organicheskoi zhizni vvergaetsia Dostoevskim v chistilishche i ad goroda i tam prokhodit on svoi put' stradaniia, iskupaet vinu svoiu.[3]

Indeed, Raskolnikov's theory created in the hell of the city, reflects the results of arbitrary will.

We shall characterize Raskolnikov's theory as the

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[2] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, op. cit., p. 37.

[3] Ibid., p. 43.

"theory of the superman". Raskolnikov divides human society into two classes, the ordinary and the extraordinary. Functionally, the ordinary class must fill the planet and propagate the human race. The extraordinary people, on the other hand, make innovations. They serve a teleological function. Raskolnikov explains his theory to Porfiry Petrovich, the criminal investigator as follows:

> Pervy razriad vsegda--gospodin nastoiashchego, vtoroi razriad--gospodin budushchego. Pervye sokhraniaiut mir i priumnozhaiut ego chislenno; vtorye dvigaiut mir vedut ego k tseli. I te i drugie imeiut sovershenno odinakovoe pravo sushchestvovat'.[4]

It is at this point that Raskolnikov confirms his belief in the New Jerusalem. His concepts take on religious overtones. He acknowledges his belief in God and the literal raising of Lazarus. Porfiry Petrovich examines Raskolnikov:

> --Tak, vy vse-taki verite zhe v Novyi Ierusalim?
> --Veruiu, . . .
> --I-i-i v boga veruete? . . .
> --Veruiu, . . .
> --I-i v voskresenie Lazaria veruete?
> --Ve-veruiu . . . .
> --Bukval'no veruete?
> --Bukval'no. (P.N., III, v, 271)

This brief reference to God serves to account for Raskolnikov's ultimate salvation from eternal damnation. Eventually through suffering, Raskolnikov will give himself over to his faith in God.

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[4] F.M. Dostoevskii, Prestuplenie i nakazanie in: Sobranie sochinenii, op. cit., Vol. 5, III, v, 271. Hereinafter cited in the body of this study as P.N.

Transgression of laws, including the moral right to shed blood, are fundamental to the extraordinary person's means of directing human destiny. Accordingly, the extraordinary person is bound by duty to overcome any person who stands in his way. Thus, Raskolnikov endows the extraordinary person with the absolute right to assert his will. In this way he, the extraordinary person, becomes a man-god endowed with the power to commit the whole gamut of evil deeds. Kepler, Newton and Napoleon are among the extraordinary people to whom Raskolnikov attributes these qualities.

Characteristically, these men, if faced with human obstacles, were morally compelled to destroy anvone who crossed their path. They would also be exempt from punishment for doing so.

> No esli emu nado, dlia svoei idei, pereshagnut' khotia by i cherez trup, cherez krov', to on vnutri sebia, po sovesti, mozhet, po-moemy, dat' sebe razreshenie pershagnut' cherez krov', . . . (P.N., III, v, 270)

Murder and crime transcend the usual concepts of good and evil. They are equated with the extraordinary person's privilege arbitrarily to impose his will whatever the consequences.

Raskolnikov identifies himself with the extraordinary person. According to Ivanov he subjugates reality

to his own demands.[5] He intentionally slays and robs an old pawnbroker, Alena Ivanovna and kills Lizaveta who accidentally comes upon the scene. He claims that Alena Ivanovna's money will improve his and his family's lot. However, the matter is more complex. Raskolnikov desires to assert his will in order to rise above all humankind. This is brought out when Shestov comments upon Raskolnikov:

> Inache govoria, Raskol'nikov stanovitsia "po tu storonu dobra i zla", . . . Borias' so zlom, on vydvigal v ego zashchitu takie argumenty, o kotorykh ono i mechtat' nikogda ne smelo. Sama sovest' vziala na sebia delo zla!...[6]

After the murder Raskolnikov's theory as it regards him, assumes a secondary role. Because he is not a "superman" his emotions overwhelm his will and intellect. He fails to rob the old woman of her fortune and acquires only petty objects from her apartment. He hides these under a tree and never puts them to use. Again, whatever money he obtains from his mother, he gives away to Katerina for Marmeladov's funeral. When Raskolnikov applies his theory to objective reality, the theory breaks down. He exists in a perpetual state of anxiety.

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[5] V. Ivanov. Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky, p. 75.

[6] L. Shestov, Dostoevskii i Nitshe: filosophiia tragedii, op. cit., pp. 106-7.

Even before Raskolnikov, the theorist, commits murder one can witness his emotional counterpart taking over. He debates inwardly and ponders his actions. He has difficulty in rationalizing his theory. He has a dream symbolizing future events the night before he murders Alena Ivanovna. In the dream Raskolnikov conjures up a peasant who beats his old horse to death. Such needless slaughter of an innocent animal upsets Raskolnikov who in the dream is just a young boy. This outpouring of Raskolnikov's soul symbolizes the impending murder of the old pawnbroker. When he awakens, Raskolnikov is frightened. He cannot imagine the reality of murder. He says:

> --Net, ia ne vyterpliu, ne vyterpliu! Pust', pust' dazhe net nikakikh somnenii vo vsekh etikh raschetakh, bud' eto vse, chto resheno v etot mesiats, iasno kak den', spravedlio kak arifmetika. Gospodi! Ved' ia vse zhe ravno ne reshus'! Ia ved' ne vyterpliu, ne vyterpliu!... Chego zhe, chego zhe i do sikh por...! (P.N., I, v, 65)

A moment later he begs God to relieve him of his terrible burden:

> On pochustvoval, chto uzhe sbrosil s sebia eto strashnoe bremia, davivshee ego tak dolgo, i na dushe ego stalo vdrug legko i mirno. "Gospodi!--molil on,--pokazhi mne put' moi, a ia otrekaius' ot etoi prokliatoi...mechty moei!" (P.N., I, v, 65-66)

The above dream as a manifestation of Raskolnikov's future crime temporarily purges his soul from the dictates of his will and intellect. Once committed this crime becomes the force which ultimately causes Raskolnikov both

to yield to his belief in God and the literal raising of Lazarus, as well as to accept his suffering. This is in keeping with the role of crime in Dostoevsky's fiction as stated by Rozanov:

> S prestupleniem vskryvaetsia odin iz etikh temnykh rodnikov nashikh idei i oshchushchenii, i totchas vskryvaiutsia pered nami dukhovnye niti, sviazyvaiushchie mirozdanie i vse zhivoe v nem [man, C.A.] . . . Zakony zhizni i smerti stanoviatsia oshchutimymi dlia nego, . . .[7]

We may comprehend the degeneration of Raskolnikov's intellectual theory in the above sense. When the murderer reaches a height of rational deliberation and concentration, his irrational side takes control. He is purged of the evil assertion of his will. He is no longer capable of complete rationality. His emotional counterpart remains ever in the background.

> I esli by dazhe sluchilos' kogda'nibud' tak, chto uzhe vse do poslednei tochki bylo im razobrano i resheno okonchatel'no i somnenii ne ostavalos' by uzhe bolee nikakikh,--to tut-to by, kazhetsia, on i otkazalsia ot vsego, kak ot neleposti, chudovishchnosti i nevozmozhnosti (P.N., I, vi, 76).

After the murder Raskolnikov surrenders almost completely to the emotional side of his nature. He makes a mess of the murder itself and by pure chance escapes the scene of the crime. On his return home he is freed

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[7] V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, op. cit., pp. 71-2.

from his burden by becoming delirious. As time goes on he disassociates himself from his family, friends and acquaintences. Whenever he comes into contact with people he experiences despair and anxiety:

> Mrachnoe oshchushchenie muchitel'nogo, beskonechnogo uedineniia i otchuzhdeniia vdrug soznatel'no skazalis' dushe ego . . . . I chto vsego muchitel'nee--èto bylo bolee oshchushchenie, chem sozananie, chem poniatie; neposredstvennoe oshchushchenie, muchitel'neishee oshchushchenie iz vsekh do sikh por zhizniiu perezhitykh im oshchushchenii. (P.N., II, i, 109-10)

As Raskolnikov treads the difficult path of suffering and salvation he encounters Svidrigaylov, the epitome of evil. Svidrigaylov's life revolves around pursuit of sensual pleasures. He is the grotesque manifestation of Raskolnikov's theoretical prototype. To him everything is permitted. He perverts "the theory of the superman" and carries it to the most dire consequences. While pursuing the most evil designs he experiences conscious delight.

In his efforts to quench his desires, Svidrigaylov debases and defiles all people with whom he is involved. Rumors claim that he plotted to murder his own wife.[8] What we know to be fact is that Svidrigaylov longs for Dunya, Raskolnikov's sister. He conspires to bring her down to

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[8] See P.N., IV, ii, 308, where Pul'kheriia Alexandrovna, Raskolnikov's mother, attributes Marfa Petrovna's (Svidrigaylov's wife) death to Svidrigaylov. Further, on p. 309 Peter Luzhin attributes another death to Svidrigaylov.

his own corrupt level by seducing her and debasing all the virtues which she possesses.

The extent of Svidrigaylov's perverseness is evidenced by his insatiable lust for an innocent, sixteen year old girl. He relishes the prospect of her deflowering. When Raskolnikov asks if he really intends to marry the young lady, Svidrigaylov replies:

> --A chto zh? Nepremenno. Vsiak ob sebe sam promyshliaet i vsekh veselei tot i zhivet, kto vsekh luchshe sebia sumeet nadut'. Kha! kha! Da chto vy v dobrodetel'-to tak vsem dyshlom v"ekhali? Poshchadite, batiushka, ia chelovek greshnyi. Khe! khe! khe! (P.N., VI, iv, 502)

Svidrigaylov revels in his self-indulgent baseness. Nevertheless there is a dichotomy in his own nature revealed by the fact that he suffers remorse because of his wicked inclinations. In order to escape this suffering he commits suicide.

Svidrigaylov's suicide tends to support Rozanov's contention that when man is alienated from the laws of life and death he perishes. ". . . on neozhidanno chuvstvuet, chto v odnom meste pererval odnu iz takikh nitei, i perervav--kak-to stranno sam pogib."[9] Svidrigaylov's suicide represents his mere physical severance from an existence devoid of spiritual meaning.

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[9] V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, p. 72.

Whereas Svidrigaylov becomes the demonic manifestation of arbitrary will, Sonya, represents suffering and ressurection. Sonya, an extremely meek young woman who values the Christian virtues of humility and suffering, surrenders herself to a life of prostitution. She does this in order to support her stepmother and stepbrothers and sisters. Without her aid this destitute family could not survive. By lowering herself to the most degrading life possible, Sonya accepts suffering. She possesses an unshakable faith in the infinite wisdom of the Lord and the teachings of the Gospel. Despite the fact that she endures an existence of sin and shame, she retains the purity of her soul. This is brought out by the narrator:

> Ves' ètot pozor, ochevidno, kosnulsia ee tol'ko mekhanicheski; nastoiashchii razvrat eshche ne pronik ni odnoiu kaplei v ee serdtse: on èto videl; ona stoiala pered nim naiavu... (P.N., IV, iv, 336)

Sonya remains pure and virginal when confronted by evil. She freely chooses good and the true path of the Lord. Only through her faith and constant prayer is she able to cope with her life. She humbly accepts her suffering. With religious fervor she turns to God and the Gospels in order to justify her existence and maintain her ties with humanity. Sonya wants Raskolnikov to recognize universal humankind. This is brought out by Ivanov when he discusses Raskolnikov and Sonya. Ivanov maintains that Sonya restored Raskolnikov to universal life. According to Ivanov a need for such a union is quite common in Dostoevsky's

fiction:

> . . . for Dostoevsky the people itself is the all-unifying, universal human principle, which, in all its sinfulness and humiliation, embraces God and stands opposed to isolated personality that is in conflict with God.[10]

Sonya and Svidrigaylov represent the two polarities of Raskolnikov's struggle between good and evil. Svidrigaylov consciously asserts his destructive will. Sonya, on the other hand, represents irrational, emotional faith in God's wisdom which provides happiness and goodness in human existence. Raskolnikov wavers between Sonya and Svidrigaylov. Whereas Svidrigaylov commits suicide to purge his soul, Raskolnikov, following Sonya's example, seeks his salvation in repentance and faith.

When Sonya sends Raskonikov to confess to the police the struggle between Svidrigaylov and Sonya reaches its height. Raskolnikov hears of Svidrigaylov's suicide from the police and is shocked: "Raskolnikov chustvoval, chto na nego kak by chto-to upalo i ego pridavilo" (P.N., VI, viii, 555). He attempts to leave the police station, but encounters Sonya in the courtyard. It is impossible for him to flee from her invincible faith:

> On [Raskolnikov, C.A.] soshel vniz i vyshel vo dvor. Tut na dvore, nedaleko ot vykhoda, stoiala blednaia, vsia pomertvevshaia, Sonia i diko, diko na nego posmotrela. On ostanovilsia pered

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[10] V. Ivanov, Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky, p. 80.

> neiu. Chto-to bol'noe i izmuchennoe vyrazilos' v litse ee, chto-to otchaiannoe. Ona vsplesnula rukami. Bezobraznaia, poteriannaia ulybka vydavilas' na ego ustakh. On postoial, usmekhnulsia i povorotil naverkh, opiat' v kontoru. (P.N., VI, viii, 555-56)

Here Raskolnikov succumbs to the emotional forces which have previously sought to dominate in the dichotomy of his soul.

Raskolnikov's passage to life's vibrant flow is slow and painful. He experiences difficulty in departing from his beloved theories and formulas. When he enters prison he is disliked by his inmates and cannot cope with prison life. Eventually he begins to accept the fact that he is not a "moral superman". He is not made of bronze like Napoleon. Instead he belongs to the ordinary class of people. This admission causes him to suffer greatly. He can no longer maintain his intellectual theories and finally, he frees himself from them. He comprehends the full extent of his anguish through his love for Sonya. Their need to accept suffering through love and faith becomes clear to him. Suddenly the other prisoners accept Raskolnikov. At long last he is reconciled to Sonya:

> Da i chto èti vse, vse muki proshlogo! Vse, dazhe prestuplenie ego, dazhe prigovor i ssylka kazalis' emu teper', v pervom poryve, kakim-to vneshnim, strannym, kak by dazhe i ne s nim sluchivshimsia faktom. On, vprochem, ne mog v ètot vecher dolgo i postoianno o chem-nibud' dumat', sosredotochit'sia na chem-nibud' mysliu; da on nichego by i ne razreshil teper' soznatel'no, on tol'ko chustvoval. (P.N., Epilogue, ii, 573)

Raskolnikov's apocalyptic dream in which people manifest their will and intellect now becomes clear. Just as the people in his dream consider themselves extraordinarily wise and intelligent, so does Raskolnikov when he commits murder. He realizes that he did not move human destiny to the New Jerusalem. Instead, he stubbornly asserted his will and valued only his intellect. He consciously disregarded emotional facets of his nature. Realistically, he simply murdered an old pawnbroker. According to Merezhkovsky:

> Raskol'nikov ubivaet starukhu, chtoby dokazat' sebe samomu, chto on uzhe "po tu storonu dobra i zla", chto on--ne "drozhashchaia tvar'", a "vlastelin'". No Raskol'nikov po zamyslu Dostoevskogo, dolzhen poniat', chto oshibsia, ubil ne "printsip", a tol'ko starukhu, ne "perestupil", a tol'ko khotel perstupit'. I kogda on eto poimet--dolzhen oslabet', ispugat'sia, vyiti na ploshchad' i, stav na koleni, ispovedyvat'sia pered tolpoiu.[11]

Raskolnikov suffers in making his public confession and, indeed, he must suffer more than this.

When people assert their will they begin to rely exclusively upon intellect. Unfortunately, will degenerating into intellect often creates unrealistic theories resulting in chaos and disorder. When free from the combined tyranny of will and intellect, it is possible for the human soul to appreciate the true beauty of God's unity with humanity. Sonya and Raskolnikov enjoy infinite

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[11] D. Merezhkovskii, Tolstoi i Dostoevskii, op. cit., Vo. 10, p. 98.

happiness in their faith and love for God as well as in their hardship and suffering. "Vmesto dialektiki nastupila zhizn', i v soznanii dolzhno bylo vyrabotat'sia chto-to sovershenno drugoe" (P.N., Epilogue, ii, 573).

CHAPTER III

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

In The Brothers Karamazov Ivan Karamamazov transforms Raskolnikov's "theory of the superman" into a dynamic philosophy in which everything is permitted. The Brothers Karamazov takes many of the same ideas portrayed in Crime and Punishment and reinstates them in a new, concrete form. Here again we witness the realization of arbitrary will resulting in chaos and disorder. Just as Svidrigaylov is the evil incarnation of Raskolnikov's "moral superman", Smerdyakov is Ivan's conscience in action. Whereas Ivan and Smerdyakov portray the evil manifestation of will combined with intellect, Fedor and Dmitri Karamazov take the path of unbridled corruption. They are often content in their vice. They differ from Ivan in that they do not agonize over theories which would rationalize the baseness of their actions. Nevertheless, in the novel their self-indulgent acts are bound up with Ivan's theory that "everything is permitted". The result is the sin of parricide. Among the brothers it is Alyosha Karamazov who basically escapes this evil chaos. Like the elder, Zossima, he directs humanity towards God's warmth and love. In order to understand Alyosha's role as a light shining through darkness, it is most relevant to focus upon the overpowering evil and chaos which throughout the novel constantly endeavor to destroy him and those close to him.

Ivan Karamazov, the intellectual, is possessed by an idea. From the hypothesis that God and immortality do not exist, Ivan concludes that everything is permitted. Ivan maintains that a belief in immortality of the soul lays the foundation for the love of one's fellow human beings. Without this belief people lose their faith in God and must inevitably act counter to the ethical tenets of Christianity. People begin to love living life more than the meaning of it. They thirst for life's most sensual satisfactions. Mr. Miusov explains these basic tenets of Ivan's philosophy as follows:

> Malo togo: togda nichego uzhe ne budet beznravstvennogo, vse budet pozvoleno, dazhe antropofagiia. No i etogo malo, on, [Ivan, C.A.] zakonchil utverzhdeniem, chto dlia kazhdogo chastnogo litsa, naprimer kak by my teper', ne veruiushchego ni v boga, ni v bessmertie svoe, nravstvennyi zakon prirody dolzhen nemedlenno izmenit'sia v polnuiu protivopolozhnost' prezhnemu, religioznomu, i chto egoizm dazhe do zlodeistva ne tol'ko dolzhen byt' dozvolen cheloveku, no dazhe priznan neobkhodimym, samym razumnym i chut' li ne blagorodneishim iskhodom v ego polozhenii. (B.K., 1, II, vi, 90)

Father Zossima hears Ivan's theory and says that Ivan is either the most blessed or most unhappy person on earth. He has typically sensed Ivan's character for the latter proves to be true. Ivan is ultimately overwhelmed by the consequences of his theory and eventually finds himself driven to the brink of madness.

Ivan's tale, "The Grand Inquisitor", provides further insight into his theories. Before Ivan narrates his tale

he and his brother, Alyosha, sit together in a tavern and discuss various facets of his philosophy.

Here Ivan relates that despite his confusion and anxiety he loves life. He states:

> Zhit' khochetsia, i ia zhivu, khotia by i vopreki logike. Pust' ia ne veriu v poriadok veshchei, no dorogi mne kleikie, raspuskaiushchiesia vesnoi listochki, dorogo goluboe nebo, dorog inoi chelovek, kotorogo inoi raz, poverish' li, ne znaesh' za chto i liubish', . . . Tut ne um, ne logika, tut nutrom, tut chrevom liubish', pervye svoi molodye sily liubish'... (B.K., 2, V, iii, 288-89)

In spite of this sensuous attraction to life Ivan still continues to agonize over the problems of good and evil. He remembers the eighteenth century philosopher who remarked, "s'il n'existait pas Dieu il faudrait l'inventer (B.K., 2, V, iii, 294). Ivan does not question whether God invented humanity or whether humanity invented God. According to him, such grandiose questions surpass human comprehension. People only possess an Euclidean or earthly ability of thought. Hence dilemmas concerning the existence of a higher spirit are above them. Ivan maintains that, indeed, he does believe in eternal harmony, immortality of the soul and God. Nevertheless he cannot accept God's creation, i.e., a world full of anguish and despair. He says to Alyosha:

> . . . v okonchatel'nom rezul'tate ia mira èto bozh'ego -- ne prinimaiu, khot' i znaiu, chto on sushchestvuet, da ne dopuskaiu ego vovse. Ia ne boga ne prinimaiu, poimi ty èto, ia mira, im sozdannogo, mira-to bozh'ego ne prinimaiu

> i ne mogu soglasit'sia priniat'.
> (B.K., 2, V, iii, 295)

Thus Ivan rejects a world that is full of evil, specifically suffering. Rozanov refers to this characteristic of Ivan when he states:

> My opiat' vstrechaemsia s oborotom myshleniia, sovershenno neizvestnym: tvar' ne otritsaet Tvortsa svoego, ona Ego priznaet i znaet; ona vosstaet protiv Nego, otritsaet tvorenie Ego i s nim -- sebia, oshchutiv v poriadke etogo tvoreniia nesovmestimoe s tem, kak imenno sama ona sotvorena.[1]

Because Ivan rejects a world marred by needless suffering, no ultimate harmony will serve to atone for it. This is the case in spite of his expressed belief in the coming harmony:

> . . . sluchitsia i iavitsia nechto do togo dragotsennoe, chto khvatit ego na vse serdtsa, na utolenie vsekh negodovanii, na iskuplenie vsekh zlodeistv liudei, vsei prolitoi imi ikh krovi, khvatit, chtoby ne tol'ko bylo vozmozhno prostit', no i opravdat' vse, chto sluchilos' s liud'mi, -- pust', pust' eto vse budet i iavitsia, no ia-to etogo ne prinimaiu i ne khochu priniat'. (B.K., 2, V, iii, 295)

It is children who serve as the prime example of needless suffering in Ivan's mind. Their suffering motivates his agony over good and evil in God's world. According to him children are innocent. They are too young to have tasted life's sensual pleasures. He relates to Alyosha several stories in which children are made to endure

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[1] V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, op. cit., p. 83.

tremendous suffering.[2] These paradoxes underlie his refusal to accept God's world. He asks Alyosha:

> Skazhi mne sam priamo, ia zovu tebia -- otvechai: predstav', chto èto ty sam vozvodish' zdanie sud'by chelovecheskoi s tsel'iu v finale oschastlivit' liudei, dat' im, nakonets, mir i pokoi, no dlia èto go neobkhodimo i neminuemo predstoialo by zamuchit' vsego lish' odno tol'ko krokhotnoe sozdan'itse, vot togo samogo rebenochka, bivshego sebia kulachonkom v grud', i na neotomshchennykh slezkakh ego osnovat' èto zdanie, soglasilsia li by ty byt' arkhitektorom na ètikh usloviiakh, skazhi i ne lgi! (B.K., 2, V, iv, 308)

Alyosha's negative answer points to a paradox which is fundamental to Dostoevsky's philosophy, i.e. the incompatibility of suffering and "collective happiness" on this earth. Rozanov in Dostoevsky and the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor discusses such a paradox when he says of Ivan's question to Alyosha:

> Nel'zia kolebat'sia v otvete: esli chelovechestvo skazhet: "da, mogu priniat'", to ono totchas zhe i perestanet byt' chelovechestvom, "obrazom i podobiem Bozhiem", i obratitsia v sobranie zverei; otvet zhe otritsatel'nyi utverzhdaet i opravdyvaet otkaz ot vechnoi garmonii, -- i tem vse obrashchaet v khaos...[3]

The tale about the Grand Inquisitor contains a solution leading to the eradication of evil seen as suffering. The setting of the tale is Seville during the time of

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[2] See B.K., where in the chapter entitled "Bunt" (2, V, iv) Ivan gives several examples of children's suffering.

[3] V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, p. 111.

the Spanish Inquisition. During this period the Church severely punished all people who questioned the validity of its teachings. Jesus descended to earth in order to observe humanity. He radiated infinite love and thus was recognized.

At this point in the tale we meet the Grand Inquisitor who is described as follows:

> Eto devianostoletnii pochti starik, vysokii i priamoi, s issokhshim litsom, so vpalymi glazami, no iz kotorykh eshche svetitsia, kak ognennaia iskorka, blesk. (B.K., 2, V, v, 313)

When the Grand Inquisitor focused his eyes upon Jesus he was infuriated. He commanded his guards to seize Jesus and take Him to prison. Late that night the Grand Inquisitor visited the prisoner. Here the Grand Inquisitor engaged in an intricate monologue in which he advanced his ideas on world order as follows.

God gave people a guide which taught them to lead their lives in a proper manner, the Ten Commandments. According to the Grand Inquisitor, however, God soon realized that through the Ten Commandments faith and love were not freely given, but rather extorted. People submitted to God because they feared punishment for transgression of His laws. God desired that people should love and respect Him of their own free will. He thus blessed humanity with Grace, the gift of freedom. People became liberated for they were free to choose between good and evil.

The Grand Inquisitor disapproves of God's gift of

freedom. Freedom, in his opinion, leads to human despair and suffering, evils in their own right. People are too weak to choose good when confronted by evil. Due to this inherent weakness, they enter a world in which they are deprived of a sense of God's warmth and love. The Grand Inquisitor says to Jesus:

> Uvazhaia ego [Man, C.A.] menee, menee by ot nego i potreboval, a èto bylo by blizhe k liubvi, ibo legche byla by nosha ego. On slab i podl. (B.K., 2, V, v, 322)

In the Grand Inquisitor's scheme people, unable to bear the choice between good and evil, turn to miracle and mystery. Here he acknowledges the fact that people need more than physical sustenance which in the story is symbolized by earthly bread. They seek their creator and the meaning of their existence. He emphasizes the human need for a knowledge of life's purpose:

> Ibo taina bytiia chelovecheskogo ne v tom, chtoby tol'ko zhit', a v tom, dlia chego zhit'. Bez tverdogo predstavleniia sebe, dlia chego emu zhit', chelovek ne soglasitsia zhit' i skoree istrebit sebia, chem ostanetsia na zemle, khotia by krugom ego vse byli khleby. Èto tak, no chto zhe vyshlo: vmesto togo chtob ovladet' svobodoi liudei, ty [Jesus, C.A.] uvelichil im ee eshche bol'she! Ili ty zabyl, chto spokoistvie i dazhe smert' cheloveku dorozhe svobodnogo vybora v poznanii dobra i zla? Net nichego obol'stitel'nee dlia cheloveka kak svoboda ego sovesti, no net nichego i muchitel'nee. (B.K., 2, V, v, 320 [Emphasis added, C.A.])

Thus out of compassion for humanity the Grand Inquisitor further renounces God's gift of freedom.

By correcting God's mistake, i.e., by denying

freedom, the Grand Inquisitor and his followers endeavor to do "good" by eradicating human suffering. According to the Grand Inquisitor social order should be based upon miracle, mystery and authority. He establishes these forces and thus hopes to relieve people of their burden of freedom. In his system people are no longer required to think. The Grand Inquisitor thinks through and solves all problems. In this way he creates good symbolized by "collective happiness".

Because the Grand Inquisitor denies people freedom of spirit including the choice between good and evil he emerges as the true Antichrist in the sense advanced by Berdiaev in The Russian Idea.[4] Ivan's tale illustrates the dualistic struggle between Christ and Antichrist, good and evil, which according to Berdiaev is common to Dostoevsky's novels:

> . . . on [Dostoevsky, C.A.] prizvan byl v kontse novoi istorii, u poroga kakoi-to novoi mirovoi epokhi raskryt' v cheloveke bor'bu nachal bogo-chelovecheskikh i cheloveko-bozheskikh, khristovykh i antikhristovykh, . . . Zlo iavliaetsia v oblichii dobra i prel'shchaet. Obraz Khrista i antikhrista, Bogo-cheloveka i chelovekoboga dvoitsia.[5]

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[4] See p. 12, Footnote 23 of this study where Berdiaev advances the principle of the Antichrist.

[5] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, op. cit., p. 57.

At this point the Grand Inquisitor presents us with a perplexing situation. He disdains people in their weakness, but at the same time hopes to improve their earthly condition by eradicating human suffering. Rozanov expresses this dialectic well when he states:

> . . . v nei [Ivan's legend, C.A.] my nakhodim glubokoe soznanie chelovecheskoi slabosti, granichashchee s prezreniem k cheloveku, i odnovremenno liubov' k nemu, prostiraiushchuiusia do gotovnosti -- ostavit' Boga i poiti razdelit' unizhenie cheloveka, zverstvo i glupost' ego, no i vmeste -- stradanie.[6]

Ivan in "The Grand Inquisitor" presents the principle of the Antichrist. He attempts to solve the eternal problem of evil, symbolized by human suffering. His Grand Inquisitor wishes to alter human destiny by depriving people of freedom of choice between good and evil, which is tanamount to spiritual treason. As a result of his theory Ivan himself renounces God and thus experiences a mental breakdown. The combined assertion of his will and intellect lead irrevocably to suffering and despair. Zenkovsky in "Dostoevsky's Religious and Philosophical Views" discusses Dostoevsky's characters, especially Ivan and Raskolnikov, who turn away from God and yield to the combined evil of the will and intellect: ". . . man cannot in fact evade the Good; and if, having yielded to the free play of his passions, he

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[6]V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, p. 182.

turns his back on the good, a tormenting disease of the soul begins in him."[7] Whereas Raskolnikov eventually experiences resurrection, Ivan's spiritual crisis is never explicitly resolved in the novel.

Smerdyakov, Ivan's double in action, highlights the struggle taking place within Ivan's tormented soul. As Svidrigaylov represents the evil manifestation of Raskolnikov's "theory of the superman", Smerdyakov becomes the soldier of Ivan's intellectual powers. Smerdyakov in his relationship to Ivan is illustrated by several situations. Both Smerdyakov and Ivan are often destined to share similar experiences. However, those events which befall Ivan, happen to Smerdyakov in the most ridiculous manner. Both men are sons of Fedor Pavlovitch Karamazov. Whereas Smerdyakov is a bastard, the illegitimate son of a half wit, Stinking Lizaveta (Lizaveta Smerdiashchaia), Ivan is a true heir to the old man's estate. He is born from a legitimate union.

At the time of the murder both Smerdyakov and Ivan seemingly disappear. Smerdyakov feigns an epileptic fit while Ivan disappears from the entire scene. He travels to Moscow. However, in reality they are both present at the murder for Smerdyakov commits the crime and Ivan wills him to act.

After the parricide Smerdyakov falls so ill that

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[7] V. Zenkovsky, "Dostoevsky's Religious and Philosophical Views" in: Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays, op. cit., pp. 135-6.

he wavers between life and death. He has never before experienced such severe attacks of epilepsy. Condemned to a sick bed, he studies French vocabulary. Ivan also loses touch with reality after the murder. He is horrified at his conscious desire for his father's death. He succumbs to a nightmare and falls into a hallucinatory state in which he is tormented by the devil. Finally after Smerdyakov commits suicide, Ivan becomes so ill that he makes a complete fool out of himself in the courtroom. Smerdyakov and Ivan thus form a symbiotic relationship in which Smerdyakov sucks from Ivan his highest ideas, vulgarizes them and uses them to bring about evil.

Smerdyakov accuses Ivan of being the instigator of the parricide. He taunts and torments Ivan with the idea that it was Ivan who committed the crime. He says to Ivan:

> . . . vy vinovny vo vsem-s, ibo pro ubivstvo vy znali-s i mne ubit' poruchili-s, a sami, vse znamshi, uekhali. Potomu i khochu vam v sei vecher èto v glaza dokazat', chto glavnyi ubivets vo vsem zdes' edinyi vy-s, a ia tol'ko samyi ne glavnyi, khot' èto i ia ubil. A vy samyi zakonnyi ubivets i est'! (B.K., 4, XI, viii, 150)

Smerdyakov actively reflects Ivan's inner consciousness for he simply acted out what Ivan desired.

Whereas Ivan gives himself over to intellectual concerns, Fedor and Dmitri Karamazov indulge in immoral schemes and unbridled sensuality. Rakitin, a novice in the local monastary, defines the Karamazov instinct when he says to Alyosha: "Ved' i ty Karamazov! Ved' v vashem

semeistve sladostrastie do vospaleniia dovedeno" (B.K., 1, II, vii, 103).

Fedor Karamazov denies all social "norms". He defiles and derides all virtues. He forever plays the part of a buffoon. The narrator says of him:

> No deistvitel'no Fedor Pavlovich vsiu zhizn' svoiu liubil predstavliat'sia, vdrug proigrat' pred vami kakuiu-nibud' rol', i, glavnoe, bezo vsiakoi inogda nadobnosti, . . . (B.K., 1, I, i, 16-17)

He often leads people to the point of despair. Because he does not exhibit self-respect or believe in any restricting norm, he indulges in anything that promises sensual satisfaction. Rozanov describes these characteristics of Fedor Karamazov when he writes:

> Starik Karamazov--èto kak by simvol smerti i razlozheniia, vse stikhii ego dukhovnoi prirody tochno poteriali skrepliaiushchii tsentr, i my chuvstvuem trupnyi zapakh, kotoryi on rasprostraniaet soboiu. . . . Vskryta glavnaia ego cherta, otsutstvie vnutrennei sderzhivaiushchei normy, i, kak sledstvie ètogo--obnazhennaia pokhot' na vse, s nagloi usmeshkoi v otvet kazhdomu, kto vstal by pered nim s ukorom.[8]

Fedor Karamazov's burlesque and often grotesque actions give further expression to the idea that, indeed, everything is permitted if there is no belief in God or immortality of the soul.

Dmitri Karamazov, somewhat like his father, leads

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[8] V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, p. 61-2.

a life of sin and dissipation, one that causes chaos and disorder in the lives of people surrounding him. Passion and sensuality lead Dmitri to the brink of despair. Unlike his father, he acknowledges a terrible battle between good and evil raging in his tormented soul. He discusses with Alyosha the ideals of Sodom (evil) and the beauty of the Madonna (good). He explains his idea to Alyosha:

> Perenesti ia pritom ne mogu, chto inoi, vysshii dazhe serdtsem chelovek i s umom vysokim, nachinaet s ideala Madonny, a konchaet idealom Sodomskim. Eshche strashnee kto uzhe s idealom Sodomskim v dushe ne otritsaet i ideala Madonny, i gorit ot nego serdtse ego, i voistinu gorit, . . . Uzhasno to, chto krasota est' ne tol'ko strashnaia, no i tainstvennaia veshch'. Tut d'iavol s bogom boretsia, a pole bitvy--serdtsa liudei. (B.K., 1, III, iii, 138-39)

Dmitri, indeed, is horrified at his condition. He does not truly desire to assert his will and yield to the forces of evil. Rather his sensual Karamazov instincts, coupled with a violent willful nature, compel him to work evil.

Dmitri's acknowledgement of good and beauty ultimately lead him to suffering and ressurection. Eventually he and Grushenka will make a new life for themselves. Only through suffering may Dmitri purge himself of his evil past. According to Ivanov: "This passionate element in Dmitri's nature had to seek its purification in suffering; because everything must suffer that breaks

away from the primary source of Being."[9] Because he desired the death of his father and because of his evil past filled with drinking and carousing, Dmitri realizes that he must repent. He cries out:

> . . . vse my zhestoki, vse my izvergi, vse plakat' zastavliaem liudei, materei i grudnykh detei, no iz vsekh--pust' uzh tak budet resheno teper'--iz vsekh ia samyi podlyi gad! Pust'! Kazhdyi den' moei zhizni ia, biia sebia v grud', obeshchal ispravit'sia i kazhdyi den' tvoril vse te zhe pakosti. Ponimaiu teper', chto na takikh, kak ia, nuzhen udar, udar sud'by, chtob zakhvatit' ego kak v arkan i skrutit' vneshneiu siloi. Nikogda, nikogda ne podnialsia by ia sam soboi! No grom grianul. Prinimaiu muku obvineniia i vsenarodnogo pozora moego, postradat' khochu i stradaniem ochishchus'! . . . Prinimaiu kazn' ne za to, chto ubil ego, a za to, chto khotel ubit' i, mozhet byt', v samom dele ubil by... (B.K., 3, IX, ix, 630-631)

Through suffering and punishment Dmitri will purge himself of his past and enter God's earthly paradise. This is brought out by Rozanov when he relates Dmitri's condition to the human condition:

> Dmitriiu suzhdeno vozrodit'sia k zhizni; cherez stradanie on ochistitsia; . . . V etoi zhazhde bytiia i v neutolimoi-zhe zhazhde stat' dostoinym ego khotia by cherez stradanie, opiat' ugadana Dostoevskim glubochaishaia cherta istorii, samaia sushchestvennaia, byt' mozhet tsentral'naia. Edva-li ne v nei odnoi eshche sokhranilsia v cheloveke pereves dobra nad zlom,

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[9] V. Ivanov, Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky, op. cit., p. 40.

> v kotoroe on tak strashno pogruzhen, kotorym iavliaetsia kazhdyi edinichnyi ego postupok, vsiakaia ego mysl'. No pod nimi, pod vseiu griaz'iu, v tine kotoroi polzet chelovek tselye tysiacheletiia, neutolimaia zhazhda vse-taki polzti i kogda-nibud' uvidet' zhe svet--vysoko podnimaet cheloveka nad vseiu prirodoiu, est' zalog neokonchatel'noi ego gibeli sredi vsiakogo stradaniia, kakikh by to ni bylo bedstvii.[10]

At this point Alyosha's role as a light shining through darkness becomes clear. Amidst the chaos and horror perpetuated by his family he glows like a refreshing ray of sunshine. Alyosha originally choses to become a monk because the calling struck him as the way out of the darkness of evil into the light of love. The narrator comments:

> Prezhde vsego ob"iavliaiu, chto etot iunosha, Alesha, byl vovse ne fanatik, i, po-moemu po krainei mere, dazhe i ne mistik vovse. Zaranee skazhu moe polnoe mnenie: bylo on prosto rannii chelovekoliubets, i esli udarilsia na monastyrskuiu dorogu, to potomu tol'ko, chto v to vremia ona odna porazila ego i predstavila emu, tak skazat', ideal iskhoda rvavsheisia iz mraka mirskoi zloby k svetu liubvi dushi ego. (B.K., 1, I, iv, 26)

Because of Alyosha's conscious desire to alleviate suffering and steer humanity towards God, he becomes a monk. In this way he is a symbol of Christ-like good in the novel. The narrator speaks with reverance of Alyosha who was to be the central hero of Dostoevsky's work as originally conceived.

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[10] V. Rozanov, Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo, p. 63-4.

And, indeed, there can be no doubt concerning the important role he plays in the novel as it has come down to us.

Nevertheless Alyosha's choice of the path to good is in large part due to the great influence of the elder Zossima, a major bearer of Christian ideals in the novel. Father Zossima impresses Alyosha with his spiritual convictions, i.e., his standing for active love and the establishment of a Christian state. Alyosha expresses his admiration for Father Zossima and his ideal when he says of him:

> Vse ravno, on [Father Zossima, C.A.] sviat, v ego serdtse taina obnovleniia dlia vsekh, ta moshch', kotoraia ustanovit, nakonets, pravdu na zemle, i budut vse sviaty, i budut liubit' drug druga, i ne budet ni bogatykh, ni bednykh, ni vozvyshaiushchikhsia, ni unizhennykh, a budut vse kak deti bozhii i nastupit nastoiashchee tsarstvo Kristovo. (B.K., 1, i, v, 42)

This ideal is to be understood as the Christian alternative to a godless, socialist state, "the tower of Babel".

Father Zossima's principle of active love is translated into reality in the novel. He helps bring about happiness in several instances. In the chapter entitled "Veruiushchie baby" (B.K., 1, II, iii) he restores peace to the hearts of several peasant women. In the following chapter, "Malovernaia dama" (B.K., 1, II, iv), it is suggested that he has a curative effect on Lise and he instructs the doubting Madame Khokhlakov in the virtues of Christian love and obedience. His ability to divine and alleviate the spiritual plight of the multitudes who

throng to him expresses both the need for and the power of Christian faith.

It is Father Zossima's ideas concerning a Christian state that point to his ideal of good. In the chapter entitled "Budi, budi!" (B.K., 1, II, v) Father Zossima expresses his belief that in order for true harmony and universal happiness to reign on this earth, the Christian church, the embodiment of traditional values concerning good and evil, must encompass the state. He illustrates this view in his discussion of crime, suffering and regeneration. Father Zossima maintains that in present day society the criminal is not directed to the path of eternal salvation. Instead society bans the criminal and ignores his most basic needs, i.e., repentance and regeneration. In order to reunite the criminal with Christian ethics, the Church must take over the state. Thus the criminal would experience severe remorse because a crime against the state is a crime against Christ. The criminal will recognize his own need to repent and return to God. This is indicated in Father Zossima's following statements:

> . . . --ved' esli by teper' ne bylo Khristovoi tserkvi, to ne bylo by prestupniku nikakogo i uderzhu v zlodeistve i dazhe kary za nego potom, to est' kary nastoiashchei, ne mekhanicheskoi, kak oni skazali seichas, i kotoraia lish' razdrazhaet v bol'shinstve sluchaev serdtse, a nastoiashchei kary, edinstvennoi deistvitel'noi, edinstvennoi ustrashaiushchei i umirotvoriaiushchei,

> zakliuchaiushcheisia v soznanii sobstvennoi sovesti. (B.K., 1, II, v, 83)

He further adds:

> Esli chto i okhraniaet obschestvo dazhe v nashe vremia i dazhe samogo prestupnika ispravliaet i v drugogo cheloveka pererozhdaet, to eto opiat'-taki edinstvenno lish' zakon Khristov, skazyvaiushchiisia v soznanii sobstvennoi sovesti. Tol'ko soznav svoiu vinu kak syn Khristova obshchestva, to est' tserkvi, on soznaet i vinu svoiu pred samim obschestvom, to est' pred tserkov'iu. Takim obrazom, pred odnoiu tol'ko tserkov'iu sovremennyi prestupnik i sposoben soznat' vinu svoiu, a ne to chto pred gosudarstvom. Vot esli by sud prinadlezhal obshchestvu kak tserkvi, togda by ono znalo, kogo vorotit' iz otlucheniia i opiat' priobshchit' k sebe. (B.K., 11, II, v, 83-4)

Thus, Father Zossima, like Dostoevsky, uses crime to demonstrate the need for the establishment of the Christian church upon earth as the embodiment of Christ-like good.

It is interesting to note that in the chapter "Budi, budi!" Ivan's article, in which Ivan occupies a position similar to that of Father Zossima, serves as a prelude to the above cited remarks by the elder. Father Zossima's statements, indeed, serve as an appropriate response to Ivan's theory that "everything is permitted". Ivan maintains that everything is permitted when people no longer believe in God and immortality of the soul. Zossima agrees, but he counters the drift of Ivan's theory by affirming Christ's Church, its spiritual power and place in human society. It is precisely this Church and the ideal of Christ which promise to save people from disbelief

and its evil consequences. Along with Father Zossima, it is Alyosha who most serves to give active expression of this view in the novel.

Throughout the novel Alyosha endeavors to help his fellow humans. His aid is active. When confronted by suffering Alyosha does not simply lament upon people's fate. Instead he plunges into activity.

> . . . serdtse Aleshi ne moglo vynosit' neizvestnosti, potomu chto kharakter liubvi ego byl vsegda deiatel'nyi. Liubit' passivno on ne mog, vozliubiv, on totchas zhe prinimalsia i pomogat'. (B.K., 2, IV, v, 235)

Alyosha in his desire to help people seeks to improve the human condition.

Both Ivan and Alyosha in their affirmation of God's existence, question the necessity of human suffering. As we already mentioned Alyosha responds negatively to Ivan's question concerning an edifice to human happiness.[11] Ivan does not realize that his tormenting questions lead people to God. The paradox he expressed in "The Grand Inquisitor" represents the key to human salvation from eternal evil. Both Alyosha and Ivan come to recognize the problem of evil and human suffering in its relationship to God and good. Whereas Ivan succumbs to his theory and suffers temporary insanity, Alyosha directs his thoughts and actions

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[11] See p. 35 of this study.

to God. Berdiaev in Dostoevsky's Worldview, while examining Ivan's madness, discusses the idea that, indeed, evil serves as an affirmation of the existence of God. He writes:

> Bog imenno potomu i est', chto est' zlo i stradanie v mire, sushchestvovanie zla est' dokazatel'stvo bytiia Bozh'iego. Esli by mir byl iskliuchitel'no dobrym i blagym, to Bog byl by ne nuzhen, to mir byl by uzhe bogom. Bog est' potomu, chto est' zlo. Eto znachit, chto Bog est' potomu, chto est' svoboda.[12]

Evil becomes that force which sustains freedom to choose the path to God.

In The Brothers Karamazov good and evil as well as human suffering, serve to affirm God's existence. When an individual endures evil and suffering he experiences God. Fedor Karamazov is so content in his vice that he forever loses sight of God. Both Dmitri and Alyosha Karamazov apprehend the existence of good. Dmitri must endure suffering in order to achieve regeneration. Alyosha who has trod the difficult path of suffering is destined to enjoy God's warmth. He has overcome evil and thus with the aid of Father Zossima serves as an example of active love in the novel. Suffering indeed, is a very important concept in Dostoevsky's philosophy. In it is the power to purge humanity of evil and steer it to good.

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[12]N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, p. 86.

CHAPTER IV

DEATH OF THE GODS

As we mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Merezhkovsky perceived European civilization as based on antithetical Christian and pagan beliefs. In brief these involved meekness, obedience and spirit on the one hand and daring, defiance and corporealness on the other. In his trilogy, Chirst and Antichrist, Merezhkovsky endeavors to synthesize these two conflicting tendencies. Berdiaev in The Russian Idea mentions Merezhkovsky in this connection:

> On [Merezhkovsky, C.A.] stremitsia k sintezu khristianstva i iazychestva i oshibochno otozhestvliaet ego s sintezom dukha i ploti. Inogda ostaetsia vpechatlenie chto on khochet sintezirovat' Khrista i antikhrista.[1]

A synthesis of the latter, i.e., Christ and Antichrist would be tantamount to a synthesis of good and evil as these were understood by Dostoevsky and in traditional Christian doctrine.

The phrasing of Berdiaev's concluding sentence is indicative of a problem in treating Merezhkovsky's works, i.e., "Sometimes one is left with the impression that he wants. . ." Whereas in the Dostoevsky works heretofore examined the ethico-philosophical message involving good and evil was either clear from the unfolding of events or from symbolic character relationships as in Crime and

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[1]N. Berdiaev, Russkaia ideia, op. cit., p. 225.

Punishment (Svidrigaylov, Raskolnikov and Sonya), or, as in The Brothers Karamazov, the narrator openly committed himself on good and evil in connection with Christianity, matters are less clear in the case of Merezhkovsky. He is most difficult to pin down as author-narrator. E. Lundberg bears witness to this in his monograph, Merezhkovkii i ego novoe khristianstvo (Merezhkovsky and His New Christianity): "Pisat' o Merezhkovskom? O Merezhkovskom nel'zia pisat', ibo ego net v ego proizvedeniiakh."[2] Merezhkovsky who loves to deal with antitheses and contradictions in his fiction is unclear in his handling of the concepts of good and evil. Indeed, juxtaposition and opposition characterize his work more than resolution of such polarities. Berdiaev comments upon this Merezhkovskian trait: "No u Merezhkovskogo nel'zia uzhe naiti ètogo neobyknovennogo pravdoliubiia russkoi literatury, u nego vse dvoitsia, on igraet sochetaniiami slov, prinimaia ikh za real'nosti."[3]

Further, Berdiaev notes that Merezhkovsky often cannot distinguish between good and evil, Christ and Antichrist:

> Èto osobenno otrazilos' v tvorchestve Merezhkovskogo, kotoryi tak i ne mozhet reshit', gde Khristos, a gde antikhrist. Ego vo mnogikh otnosheniiakh zamechatel'naia

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[2] E. Lundberg, Merezhkovskii i ego novoe khristianstvo (Saint Petersburg: Shumakher i Bruker, 1914), p. 1.

[3] N. Berdiaev, Russkaia ideia, p. 221.

kniga L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii proniknuta
etim dvoeniem, etoi postoiannoi podmenoi.[4]

The fact that Merezhkovsky himself was often unclear, and the fact that this perplexed some of the finest minds of his contemporaries do not constitute reasons for avoiding the study of good and evil in his works. Quite the reverse is true. Merezhkovsky's relativism, his attempts, successful or not, at achieving a synthesis involving these concepts represent a new attitude toward them, and therefore are of crucial importance to this study.

In Merezhkovsky's trilogy Christ and Antichrist good and evil, embodied in the concepts of Christ and Antichrist, are given further elaboration. Merezhkovsky endeavored to fit these ideas into an historical framework. In referring to Christ and Antichrist Bely termed the trilogy an archealogical museum: . . . on obrashchaet vse bogatstvo svoei kritiki na to, chtoby sdelat' ekskursiiu v oblast' istorii i osvetit' ee kak-to neobychaino."[5]

Merezhkovsky superimposes his own, above-mentioned notions of Christianity and paganism intertwined with good and evil upon his historical figures. His characters lack human traits. They are symbols of his preconceived notions of Christ and Antichrist. Bely admired Merezhkovsky

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[4]N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevkogo, op. cit., p. 57

[5]A. Belyi, "Merezhkovskii" in: Lug zelenyi (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1967), p. 135.

as an erudite scholar, but complained of the lack of authenticity in his characters. To Bely they are not people, but puppets:

> Ot ètogo zhivye litsa, prokhodiashchie v ego romanakh, prevrashchaiutsia v kukol, razukrashennykh arkhealogicheskoi vetosh'iu. Stanoviatsia èmblemami mertvykh skhem . . . . Iulian, Leonardo, Petr vovse ne interesuiut Merezhkovskogo sami po sebe: tol'ko kak simvoly.[6]

Death of the Gods, the first novel in the trilogy, deals with Julian, the Apostate, the Roman Emperor. Julian parallels Raskolnikov in the assertion of his will. By trying to reinstate paganism into a Christian society, Julian hopes to accomplish the impossible. Merezhkovsky characterizes Julian as embodying both Christ and Antichrist. This particular dualism coupled with the fact that good and evil are rarely referred to explicity, make it necessary to elucidate the latter by examining the development of Julian's attitude towards related concepts, i.e., Christianity on the one hand and paganism on the other.

In his youth Julian wavers between the two opposing beliefs of Christianity and paganism. He vacillates between the beliefs of Mardonius, an advocate of ancient Greek philosophy, and Eutropius, a monk devoted to Christian dogma. Eutropius desires to teach Julian meekness, humility and obedience. Mardonius gives him books of ancient philosophers

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[6] A. Bely, "Merezhkovskii", p. 147. Merezhkovsky's subjective schematicism has dire implications for historical veracity, especially in the case of Leonardo da Vinci who was portrayed as a failure.

which acquaint the youth with the splendor and beauty of ancient Greek civilization.

Early in life Julian endeavors to fuse Christianity and paganism. He fears Christianity and feels closer ties with Greek deities. However, he cannot completely escape Christianity and the teaching of Eutropius. According to Eutropius, Julian's "diabolic" pride flows from his love of the Epicureans and their desire to satisfy sensual desires. In order to placate Eutropius, Julian feigns an air of Christian humility and obedience. Such duplicity remains with him for the remainder of his life. Julian's dual nature is best identified by Labda and the opposing personalities of Psyche and Amaryllis. Psyche, a young girl raised in the pagan tradition, respects Christian humility and obedience. Much to her parents dismay, she becomes a member of the Christian church. Psyches's sister, Amaryllis, on the other hand, possesses a youthful gaiety and tantalizing sensuality. These young women symbolize the struggle taking place within Julian's soul between Christianity and paganism.

Labda, an old slave, also excercises a tremendous influence upon Julian in early life. She fuses together both Christianity and paganism. She is a devout Christian, but is also reputed to be a Thessalian sorceress. She wears Christian crosses as well as amulets carved out of bones of the dead and scapularies containing the ashes of martyrs:

> . . . samye mrachnye, drevnie i novye sueveriia slilis' v ee golove v strannuiu religiiu, pokhozhuiu na bezumie: molitvy smeshivala ona s zaklinaniiami, olimpiiskikh bogov--s khristianskimi besami, tserkovnye obriady--s volshebstvom, . . . '[7]

Julian is marked by the strength of this woman's madness throughout his life.

As Julian progresses into manhood he encounters two men, Iamblicus and Maximus whose theories affect him. Iamblicus is a sage versed in Platonic concepts of the wisdom of the Deity in the universe. Rumors maintain that Iamblicus performed many miracles. Julian longs for a miracle, and later in life he relies upon miracles to escape destruction.

Iamblicus believes in merging the soul with God. Intellect and reason fade into the background as the soul fuses with the Divinity. The body, good, evil and the universe are mirages, a falsification of the senses. Although people will to become god through their own efforts, they, like Dostoevsky's would be man-gods, never truly succeed. According to Iamblicus, as the soul divines the Deity, people are freed from earthly sensations. Only then will they enjoy God's warmth and love, a tenet relatable to Dostoevsky's belief in God's power. However, Iamblicus, unlike Dostoevsky, holds that a society living in God's wisdom is not possible on earth. He maintains that only

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[7] D. Merezhkovskii, Smert' bogov in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, op. cit., Vol. 1, I, ii, 9. Hereinafter cited as S.B.

the god-like olympians possessed the ability to merge with God. He states:

> Dusha tvoia ne budet zhelat', potomu chto On ne zhelaet, ona ne budet zhit', potomu chto On vyshe zhizni, ona ne budet myslit', potomu chto On vyshe mysli . . . . I togda, besstrastnaia, odinokaia, pokoitsia ona vyshe razuma, vyshe dobrodeteli, vyshe tsarstva idei, vyshe krasoty--v bezdne, v lone Ottsa Svetov . . . . Takova, syn moi, zhizn' olimpiietsev, takova zhizn' liudei bogopodobnykh i mudrykh: otrechenie ot vsego, chto est' v mire, prezrenie k zemnym strastiam, begstvo dushi k Bogu, kotorogo ona vidit litsom k litsu. (S.B., I, vii, 53-4)

While Iamblicus worships Olympians, he despises the common people, even though he assumes an air of Christian humility when associating with them. He even participates in the destruction of pagan temples and statues.

At first Julian is shocked by Iamblicus' actions. Despite the latter's belief in the unity of the soul with God, he paradoxically detests individuals. He worships the Divinity and curses Christian humility and obedience. Yet he acquiesces to those qualities in order to save his own life. Julian becomes a master at making a show of obedience and humility.

Maximus is a self-proclaimed sorcerer who creates images and passes himself off as a miracle worker. He places his victim, in this case Julian, into a hypnotic trance. Julian is made to believe that he sees Hercules and Lucifer. Maximus further tells Julian that good and evil are the only two truths: "Sluzhi Arimanu, sluzhi

Ormuzdu,--kak khochesh', no pomni: oba ravny; tsarstvo d'iavola ravno tsarstvu Boga" (S.B., I, x, 70).

Julian cannot decide between two equal kingdoms He sees good and evil in both. Merezhkovsky shows Julian to be torn between two equal, but opposing philosophies. It is here that Maximus urges Julian to merge Christianity and paganism into one organic entity. He says to the future emperor: "Soedini, esli mozhesh', pravdu Titana s pravdoi Galileianina,--i ty budesh' bol'she vsekh rozhdennykh zhenami na zemle... (S.B., I, x, 72).[8]

Julian is torn between two opposing forces as is Raskolnikov. Whereas Raskolnikov struggles between the extremes of rationalism and irrationalism which are linked to Christian concepts of good and evil, Julian agonizes over Christianity and paganism.

Maximus leaves Julian with a love of pagan ritual and a desire to merge truth and falsehood. Before Julian announces to the Christian populace his reverence for antiquity he participates in a pagan ceremony during which he is covered with bull's blood. This symbolizes his

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[8]First Maximus advises Julian to choose between good and evil then he tells Julian to unite the two beliefs. This reflects a seeming inconsistency in thought. It is noteworthy, however, that the resultant synthesis would bring Julian to "supermanhood", whose kingdom Maximus forsees as coming after Julian is in a position to take over following the decease of his uncle, Constantine.

initiation into pagan life.[9] He consciously rejects Christianity, merges with the Sun-God and becomes a man-god. He says: "--Ia nichego ne boius'... Ia-kak On."[10]

Before Julian becomes ruler of the Roman Empire he encounters Arsinoe. Both Julian and Arsinoe fluctuate between Christianity and paganism. When Julian first sees her, Arsinoe is running naked in an Athenian coliseum. The narrator compares her to the ancient goddess of the hunt, Artemis. Julian is amazed at her naked beauty, but does not feel tempted. He and his friend, Publius, joyfully recall Greek civilization and regret Christianity.

> I nikto ne boialsia iskusheniia. Chistye smotreli na chistykh. Oni byli, kak deti, kak bogi...I znat', chto etogo bol'she nikogda ne budet, ne povtoritsia na zemle,--eta svoboda i chistota, i radost' zhizni--nikogda! (S.B., I, xii, 92-3)

Julian forms a close relationship with Arsinoe who is the human personification of ancient Greece. He fears an inner force compelling him towards evil as he understands it and he cries out to her for compassion:

> . . . kazhduiu noch', posle dnia, provedennogo na koleniakh v tserkvi nad grobami galileiskikh mertvetsov, ia vozvrashchaius' domoi razbityi,

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[9] Julian's initiation into pagan life can be compared to Christian baptism. In baptism water is used, whereas in pagan ceremony blood is used. This symbolizes defiance and daring as opposed to meekness and humility.

[10] Due to an error in Vol. 1 of Polonoe sobranie sochinenii in which pp. 179-190 are missing, for this quotation we will refer to Smert's bogov (Saint Petersburg: Akshch. obshch, tipogr, 1906), I, xxiii, 192.

> ustalyi, brosaius' na postel', litsom v izgolov'e, i rydaiu,--rydaiu i gryzu ego, chtoby ne krichat' ot boli i iarosti . . . . Ia--zol, i khotel by byt' eshche zlee, byt' sil'nym i strashnym, kak d'iavol, edinstvennyi brat moi! No zachem, zachem ia ne mogu zabyt', chto est' inoe, chto est' krasota, zachem ia uvidel tebia!... (S.B., I, xiv, 106-7)

Julian seems incapable of reconciling Christianity with Hellas. Good and evil merge into a nightmarish conflict from which only death delivers him.

The above encounter with Arsinoe has a climactic effect upon Julian. The next day he devoutly prays to the Christian God. His face expresses serenity and peace. The emperor's spies observe him. Basil claims that, indeed, Julian is truly a righteous and repentant person. However, his partner, Gregory, replies: "--Vspomni tol'ko, brat Vasilii, skol' chasto v obraze svetleishikh angelov iavlialsia liudiam sam satana, otets lzhi" (S.B., I, xiv, 108). Julian represents good as well as evil. The future Emperor becomes the fusion of Christ and antichrist.

Arsinoe appears later in a cloister. She tells Julian of her desire to accept the Galilean as did her sister, Myrrha. She endeavors to conquer her love of paganism. As Myrrha lies dying, Arsinoe says to her:

> --Poidu v pustyniu, Mirra, kak ty, vmesto tebia!-- . . . I esli est' Bog, On dolzhen sdelat' tak, chtoby smerti ne bylo, chtoby my byli vmeste vsegda! (S.B., I, xix, 157)

Later in the novel, when Julian once again meets Arsinoe, with whom he had concluded a pact to restore the cult of daring and beauty to Roman society, he is shocked

at her transformation. She is now dressed in the black garb worn by Christian nuns. He cannot understand her desire to subdue her body and intellect. Whereas he has dared to seize power, become the Emperor and express his love for paganism, she has pursued a totally contrary course. She explains her metamorphosis to Julian:

> Isterzaiu plot' svoiu, issushu ee golodom i zhazhdoi, sdelaiu bezchuvstvennee mertvykh kamnei. No glavnoe--razum! Nado umertvit' ego, potomu chto on--d'iavol. On soblaznitel'nee vsekh zhelanii! Ia ukroshchu ego. Eto budet posledniaia pobeda, velichaishaia! . . . Togda posmotrim, vozmutitsia li chto-nibud' vo mne, skazhet li: ne veriu. (S.B., II, viii, 241)

Arsinoe further denounces Julian's drive towards power and his means of stamping out Christianity. Julian seeks to instill paganism in a Christianized society by bestowing upon the people Christian compassion. He holds an oecumenical council in which he rationally attempts to shame various religious sects who distort the true virtues of Christianity. Thus, Julian does not impose his will. In Raskolnikov's terminology he does not exercise his moral obligation to shed blood. According to Arsinoe, the Olympian gods would consider such beneficient acts as unworthy. They would have trampled down the weak, humble masses. Julian does not equal Raskolnikov's "moral superman".

Julian is too weak to choose between good and evil. He is destined to perish because people possessed by one compelling force will conquer him. Arsinoe feels that to rank among the great it is necessary to choose between the

Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Lucifer, good and evil, Christianity and paganism:

> Net u vas sily ni v dobre, ni vo zle. Vy-- ni den', ni noch', ni zhizn', ni smert'. Serdtse vashe--i zdes' i tam; otplyli ot odnogo berega, ne pristali k drugomu. Verite i ne verite, vechno izmeniaete, vechno koleblietes', khotite i ne mozhete, potomu chto ne umeete zhelat'. Sil'ny tol'ko te, kto, vidia odnu istinu, slepy dlia drugoi. Oni vas pobediat-- dvoistvennykh, mudrykh i slabykh... (S.B., II, xiii, 243)

Julian brings about chaos in his attempt to reconcile Roman Christianity with Hellas. He stands on the brink of failure and destruction. He has not gone far enough in his attempt to heed the words of Maximus and Arsinoe. Like Iamblicus, he completely disdains the meek and humble masses of humanity. He antagonizes his own people and is known as Antichrist.

The people come to hate their new Emperor, Julian. He, then, raises himself to the level of man-god. He is possessed by the evil assertion of his arbitrary will. He loses sight of good, represented by Jesus Christ, the God-man. He endeavors to accomplish the impossible by conquering the invincible Persians. A Persian slave, the epitome of ugliness and baseness, deceives Caesar and it seems that nothing can save Julian from annihilation.

At this point Julian turns to miracle. He asserts that only a miracle can save him from the Persians. Julian's spiritual need is for a miracle. He says: "--Vse ravno, vse ravno...Chudo sovershitsia! Ne teper', tak potom. --Ia veriu v chudo!..." (S.B., II, xvi, 319).

Here Julian confirms the conviction of the Grand Inquisitor that people crave miracle.

Arsinoe comes to Julian for the final time as he awaits a miracle. Julian is slowly perishing after a final effort to prove paganism superior to Christianity. Arsinoe has merged these two opposing world views. Most Christians believe that Jesus Christ was serious and meek. Arsinoe, on the other hand feels that his actions embody love and beauty. She says:

> Razve mudretsy Ellady ne priblizhalis' k tomu, o chem govorit On? Te, kto v pustyne terzaiut plot' i dushu svoiu,--te daleki ot krotkogo Syna Marii. On liubil detei, i svobodu, i veselie pirshestv, i belye lilii. On liubil zhizn', Iulian! Tol'ko my ushli ot Nego, zaputalis' i omrachilis' dukhom. Vse oni nazyvaiut tebia otstupnikom. No sami oni--otstupniki...[11] (S.B., II, xvii, 324)

Arsinoe's words are in accord with Rozanov who also fought what he considered to be the strict dogma of Christianity. Rozanov claimed that according to Christian dogma "Christ never laughed or sang."[12]

Julian is fatally wounded the day after his final encounter with Arsinoe. He dies praising Helios, the god

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[11] Please note that in this publication of S.B.. pp. 321-24 are inserted between p. 304 and p. 305.

[12] S. Roberts, an introduction to The Conservative View: Leontiev, Rozanov, Shestov (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1968), p. xviii.

of the sun.[13] The people experience relief at Julian's death. They return to Christian humility and obedience, gratefully renouncing Julian, the Apostate, the Roman Emperor who embodied the principle of Antichrist.

Only three remaining people are shown to respect Julian's efforts to reinstate paganism in Rome. These are Arsinoe and her two friends, Anatolius and Ammianus Mercellinus. They also respect both Christianity and Hellas. They, however, disagree with Julian's methods and believe that he tried to impose pagan beliefs and rituals upon a Christian society. In his lifetime he failed to combine Christ's gentleness and the daring of the Olympian gods. Arsinoe discusses this unusual synthesis when she says of it: "--On dolzhen byt' neumolim i strashen, kak Mitra-Dionis v slave i sile svoei, miloserd i krotok, kak Iisus Galileianin..." (S.B., II, xxi, 349).

To weigh the relative merits of the dual concepts, good and evil, Christianity and paganism, and Christ and Antichrist is beside the point. The fusion of these concepts into one organic entity is desirable. Good and evil understood as Christianity and paganism assume an equal place in the essence of human life.

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[13] Helios, the sun god, is the pagan counterpart to Christ. Perhaps Julian in his final moments finally came to respect the Galilean.

In Death of the Gods good and evil, those concepts so important to Dostoevsky, become intertwined with paganism, Christianity, Antichrist and Christ. Unlike Merezhkovsky in this novel, Dostoevsky did not wish to achieve a synthesis of these concepts. Herein lies an important distinction between Dostoevsky and Merezhkovsky. Instead Dostoevsky portrayed both the tragedy of human existence when people stubbornly assert their arbitrary will and the beauty of life when they experience God. In this connection Berdiaev comments:

> Dlia nego [Dostoevsky, C.A.] dionisicheskaia tragediia, razdvoenie, bezdna, kak budto by ostaiutsia edinstvennym putem cheloveka. Put' k svetu lezhit cherez t'mu. Velichie Dostoevskogo bylo v tom, chto on pokazal, kak v t'me vozgoraetsia svet.[14]

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[14] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, p. 232.

CHAPTER V

RESURRECTION OF THE GODS

The setting of Resurrection of the Gods, the second novel in Merezhkovsky's trilogy Christ and Antichrist passes from Imperial Rome to fifteenth century renaissance Italy. Leonardo da Vinci is the central figure in this novel. Merezhkovsky envisions Leonardo da Vinci, as he did Julian, as embodying Christianity and paganism. Leonardo, just like Julian, fails to alter human destiny.

Early in the novel the two opposing philosophies of Christianity and paganism assert their influence. Leonardo da Vinci first appears at an excavation. Messer Cipriano Buonacorsi and his friends have just dug up a statue of Aphrodite, the ancient Greek goddess of love and beauty. Whereas Buonacorsi adores the love goddess, Father Faustino curses her as an abomination and equates her with the Devil himself.

Only Leonardo maintains an aura of peace and serenity. Despite the emotional outpouring of his companions, he remains tranquil and thoughtful. His desire is not to identify Aphrodite as good or evil, but simply to know her. He takes a pair of compasses, a goniometer and a semicircular arc of copper. With these he measures her dimensions in order to understand her beauty. Giovanni Beltraffio is amazed at Leonardo's lack of emotion. The artist replies:

> Dusha khudozhnika dolzhna byt' podobnoi zerkalu, kotoroe otrazhaet vse predmety, vse dvizheniia i tsveta, samo ostvaias' nepodvizhnym i iasnym.[1]

Leonardo directs his actions towards rational knowledge. In his desire to understand he tries to instruct humanity in the virtues of knowledge. In this way he opposes Christian dogma. Most Christians of this time maintained that love and faith precede knowledge. To Leonardo, however, love is the daughter of knowledge; miracle is not truth, but truth is miracle. Because he strives to know all, Leonardo respects all. Knowledge and truth become good and beauty and play an important role along with love in leading to the experiencing of God. Merezhkovsky had put forth this idea in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as follows:

> Soznanie otkryvaet uslovnost' vsiakoi religioznoi istiny; liubov' otkryvaet istinu vsiakoi religioznoi uslovnosti, vsiakogo simvola. My ne mozhem znat' Boga, ne liubia Ego; ne mozhem liubit' Ego, ne znaia: my mozhem tol'ko znat' i liubit' Ego vmeste--poznavat' v liubvi, liubit' v poznanii. Soedinenie znaniia s liubov'iu i est' nasha novaia religiia--religiia Dostoevskogo.[2]

Thus, according to Merezhkovsky, Leonardo, in his thirst for knowledge, incorporates the major tendencies of Dosotoevsky's philosophy.

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[1] D. Merezhkovskii, Voskresshie bogi in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, op. cit., Vol. 2, I, ix, 44. Hereinafter cited as V.B.

[2] D. Merezhkovskii, Tolstoi i Dostoevskii in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, Vol. 12, p. 13.

Leonardo gains his inspiration from the "Prime Mover", God. God does not frighten Leonardo nor bring him to his knees in humiliation and subjugation. He does not hide from the mysteries of the universe by attributing all natural phenomena to miracle or sorcery. Instead, Leonardo respects all forms of life. His aim is to know and understand God's universe. To him beauty and good are inherent in nature. God becomes the Prime Mover. From the Lord all natural phenomena gain their order and reason. Leonardo says of God's universe:

> --O, divnaia spravedlivost' Tvoia, pervyi Dvigatel'! Nikakuiu silu ne lishaesh' Ty poriadka i kachestva neminuemykh deistvii. O, bozhestvennaia neobkhodimost'. Ty prinuzhdaesh' vse posledstviia vytekat' kratchaishim putem iz prichiny. (V.B., X, vii, 39)

Leonardo rises above the accepted notions of good and evil during his time. He refrains from quarrels concerning Christianity and paganism and thus derives an inner peace. The narrator contrasts him with the people of his day:

> Sredy tolpy obezumevshogo naroda--v serdtse khudozhnika byl vechnyi pokoi sozertsaniia podobnyi tikhomu svetu luny nad zarevom pozharov. (V.B., X, vii, 40)

Cesare da Sesto, one of Leonardo's pupils, understands Leonardo's personality when he divines the latter's ability to respect both good and evil. He comprehends and does not fear Leonardo's portrayal of Christianity and paganism in his art. Giovanni, on the other hand, is

frightened by Leonardo's mural, "The Last Supper".[3] Here the artist depicts Christ as obedient and humble. At the same time Christ appears daring and defiant. Thus in this mural Christ also expresses mangodhood and the principle of Antichrist. Cesare explains to Giovanni this fusion of Christ and Antichrist, good and evil, as follows:

> Leonardo odin iz liudei, ponial èto slovo Gospoda i voplotil ego vo Khriste svoem, kotoryi "liubit vse, potomu chto znaet vse". (V.B., IX, xiv, 349)

In Cesare's opinion Leonardo becomes a truly religious human being. Leonardo's thirst for knowledge equals that of Christ, for both these men love all of God's creations.

In his endeavor to understand universal phenomena, Leonardo engages experimentation and empirical observation. His experiments reveal an interest in: spiders; the injection of peach trees with a poisonous serum in the hope that the peaches will becomes poisonous; the dissection of human cadavres; flying machines; moats and irrigation ditches; listening pipes; human emotions....Undoubtedly, this list

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[3] Leonardo's tendency to portray Christianity and paganism in his art occurs quite regularly throughout the novel. Very often a religious character is depicted in the image of a pagan god. The face of Christ resembles that of Bacchus. At one point an observer cannot distinguish John, the Precursor from Bacchus or Androgene. The observer is at first horrified, but then finds pleasure in such a unique synthesis of Christianity and paganism, good and evil: "Èta smes' sviashchennogo i grekhovnogo kazalas' emu teper' koshchunstvennoi i v to zhe vremia nravilás'. (V.B., XVII, vii, 348)

could continue indefinately, since the quantity of universal phenomena is innumerable.

To Christians of the fifteenth century scientific experiments were suspect and even heretical. Christianity often forbade investigation of natural phenomena. It was common belief that mysteries of God's universe are beyond human comprehension.

Reason governs Leonardo's actions and he tends to place rationality above emotional forces. With emotional detachment he observes a condemned man on his way to execution. He examines down to the most infinitesimal detail every facial movement and every raising of the eyebrow. Leonardo sees the beautiful movements of a fluttering butterfly and human terror and despair as phenomena to be observed. The hideous and absurd are parallel, in his mind, with beauty and joy.

Despite his good intentions, Leonardo's actions often result in nothingness and chaos, e.g., his flying machine, his statue of Francesco Sforza and his mural "The Last Supper' which showed signs of decay already in 1500. His life becomes impotent. Many other characters in the novel offset this characteristic of Leonardo. In contrast their actions heavily influence the sphere of human affairs. They are not passive onlookers as is Leonardo.

Girolamo Savonarola is a preacher who evokes awe and fear. His emotional sermons are highly rhetorical. He condemns the people's sins and predicts the fall of Italy.

He warns of a flood similar to the time of Noah. Borgia's papal reign in Rome and the Italian Renaissance's love of classical antiquity to the point of disregarding Christianity disturb him. He refuses to be reconciled to the lust and perverseness which characterize the Borgias. He fears for people who are inclined towards paganism. He organizes the Holy Army of Infant Inquisitors, a group of young children whose purpose is to root out evil, in part by destroying all pagan relics. He quarrels with the Franciscans and dares them to enter a fire. However, because he stubbornly refuses to be reconciled with the Pope he is condemned to excommunication and execution by burning.

Whereas Leonardo respects all life, Girolamo Savonarola blindly pursues an idea. Leonardo is oblivious to whatever religion is popular or whichever ruler is in power. He migrates from ruler to ruler. He is content as long as he can conduct his experiments. Savonarola, on the other hand, pursues his dream with rigor. Unlike Julian the Apostate, he does not waver in his endeavor to relate to the people. Instead, he exerts a tremendous amount of influence on his followers, bringing them to a state of frenzy. Whereas most Christians ignore Leonardo and leave him with his experiments, they respect Savonarola who leaves a lasting influence upon people by bringing chaos within religious thought. Thus chaos is the result of Girolamo Savonarola's self-indulgence and the assertion of his arbitrary will. Thereby he forgets Christ's wisdom which resides in Christian humility.

Other characters in Resurrection of the Gods such as members of The Most Holy Inquisition are men of action. Fra Giorgio da Casale is the representative of the movement in Milan. His aim is to root out the Devil. He perpetrates the most revolting atrocities. He loses all respect for human dignity and worth. The ideal of the Devil possesses him. Whereas in Dostoevsky's novel The Brothers Karamazov Ivan Karamazov's Grand Inquisitor hopes to eradicate suffering by depriving people of their freedom, Fra Giorgio da Casale places so much emphasis on the Devil, that the very concept loses its meaning. He is so convinced of ubiquitous "evilness" that everyone in his mind is possessed. The more witches he burns the more there are. The entire situation evolves into a vicious cycle in which more and more people are tortured and put to death. The Devil and God engage in battle for the human soul. Giovanni Beltraffio observes:

> ...ibo dlia oboikh verkhnee nebo ravno bylo nizhnemu, smysl chelovecheskoi zhizni zakliuchalsia v bor'be dvukh bezdn v chelovecheskom serdtse--s toiu lish' raznitseiu, chto ved'ma vse eshche iskala, mozhet' byt', nedostizhimogo primireniia, togda kak inkvizitor razduval ogon' etoi vrazhdy i uglublial ee beznadezhnost! (V.B., XV, iii, 268-69)

Whereas Merezhkovsky's Grand Inquisitor strives to rid the world of "evil", Ivan Karamazov's Grand Inquisitor and Leonardo endeavor to reconcile good and evil. Leonardo respects both good and evil. Fra Giorgio da Casale, on the other hand, in his desire to stamp out evil, loses sight of good. God's warmth and love fade into the background. Ivan

Karamazov's Grand Inquisitor in his own way attempts to make people happy. However, the horrors that Merezhkovsky's inquisitor perpetrates forever haunt the history of humankind.

Duke Ludovico Moro, an incompetent ruler, often causes harm and unhappiness and in this respect he reminds us of Svidrigaylov and Smerdyakov in that he perverts life's vibrant flow. To him everything is permitted. Rumors assert that he murdered his enemy, his brother-in-law, in order to seize power. More important than his political struggles, are his relationships with women. As well as being married, he has several mistresses. His wife, Beatrice, is severely distressed because of this. After her death the Duke indulges in perverse relationships with women. They engage in lesbian acts in order to remind him of his departed wife, thereby defiling the image of death.

The Duke of Moro, by his immoral actions, also makes an impact upon people. He defiles and debases them. In his relationship to other human beings Leonardo da Vinci, on the other hand, symbolizes impotence. One of his pupils, Giovanni commits suicide, and another, Astro, becomes an insane cripple incapable of action.

Leonardo's antithesis in the novel is Cesare Borgia. He alone dares to achieve the impossible. He defies both the Christian God of good and the evil gods of the pagans. Unlike Julian, he does not wish to reconcile the two beliefs or place one above the other. He fears nothing and attempts all. He becomes a man-god, defying everyone and everything

e.g., he executes people who oppose him, literally turns day into night during which he indulges in incest and fratricide.

Nicollo Machiavelli in his discussion of Cesare Borgia presents arguments put forth in Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov. He extends Ivan Karamazov's theory that everything is permitted to rulers. According to Machiavelli, people who rule over nations fit into Raskolnikov's definition of the extraordinary person. He states:

> Obyknovennye liudi ne vynosiat svobody, boiatsia ee bol'she, chem smerti, i, sovershiv prestuplenie, padaiut pod bremenem raskaianiia. Tol'ko geroi, izbrannik sud'by, imeet silu vynesti svobodu--perestupaet zakon bez strakha, bez ugryzeniia, ostavaias' nevinnym vo zle, kak zveri i bogi. (V.B., XII, xiv, 151)

Such a man, in Machiavelli's opinion, is Cesare Borgia. To him all is permitted despite the suffering he brings about.

Cesare Borgia rises above good and evil. He ignores the meaning of these concepts. He dares and defies all. He acts in such a way because he cannot conceive of an alternative way of life. He is oblivious to any good and evil resulting from his actions.

In contrast, Leonardo, through his knowledge, loves and respects all life. He explains the difference between himself and Cesare Borgia:

> --Tol'ko mne kazhetsia, ne tot svoboden, kto podobno Tsezariu, smeet vse, potomu chto ne znaet i ne liubit nichego, a tot, kto smeet, potomu chto znaet i liubit.

> Tol'ko takoiu svobodoiu liudi pobediat zlo i dobro, verkh i niz, vse pregrady i predely zemnye, vse tiazhesti, stanut, kak bogi, i--poletiat... (V.B., XII, xiv, 151-2)

In Dostoevsky's fiction Ivan Karamazov and Raskolnikov place human will coupled with intellect before God as does Machiavelli. Whereas they are fascinated with their theories, they are horrified when the theories are put into action for arbitrary will deteriorates into chaos and disorder. Leonardo, unlike these men, strives to become Christ's equal in his gentleness. He also respects each individual. However, he barely influences human destiny during his lifetime. Cesare Borgia, Michavelli's ideal of the ruler, on the other hand, like Raskolnikov's Napoleon who possessed the moral right to shed blood, is destined to momentous actions.

Still another character in the novel, Columbus, the discoverer of America, opposes Leonardo's views concerning knowledge and God. Columbus believes that the earth is not shaped like a sphere. It, instead, resembles a pear with a swelling similar to a woman's nipple. The nipple is of such a height that its summit reaches paradise. By reaching this paradise Columbus hopes to becomes one with God. He writes of Leonardo's science and reason:

> "Otniud' ne matematika, ne karty geografov, ne dovody razuma pomogli mne sdelat' to, chto ia sdelal, a edinstvenno--prorochestvo Isaii o novom nebe i novoi zemle." (V.B., IX, i, 293)

Leonardo is amazed at Columbus's ignorance. Yet,

he realizes that whereas Columbus achieves the "impossible", his own life is doomed to failure and impotence. He laments his fate as compared to that of Columbus:

> Kak malo on znal, kak mnogo sdelal! A ia so vsemi znaniiami moimi--nepodvizhen, tochno etot Berardi, razbityi paralichom: vsiu zhizn' stremlius' k nevedomym miram i shagu k nim ne sdelal. Vera, govoriat oni. No razve sovershennaia vera i sovershennoe znanie ne odno i to zhe? Razve glaza moi ne dal'she vidiat, chem glaza Kolumbo, slepogo proroka?..Ili takov udel chelovecheskii: nado byt' zriachim, chtoby znat', slepym, chtoby delat'? (V.B., IX, i, 293-4)

People who blindly pursue a goal assume an important role in the course of history. Girolama Savonarola in his blind faith in God, the Grand Inquisitor in his desire to stamp out the Devil, Duke Moro who defiles all around him, Cesare Borgia who dares all, and Columbus who seeks paradise all succeed in affecting history as it is shown in this novel. Among these major figures only Leonardo da Vinci, estranged and alienated from the mainstream of humanity, is doomed to anonymity within the novel. In explanation of such a conundrum, Dostoevsky's underground man said:

> Ved' priamoi, zakonnyi, neposredstvennyi plod soznaniia--eto inertsiia, to est' soznatel'noe slozha-ruki-siden'e . . . . Povtoriaiu, usilenno povtoriaiu: vse neposredstvennye liudi i deiateli potomu i deiatel'ny, chto oni tupy i ogranichenny . . . . Ved' chtob nachat' deistvovat', nuzhno byt' sovershenno uspokoennym predvaritel'no i chtob somnenii uzh nikakikh ne ostavalos'. (Z.I.P., I, v, 145-6)

It is important to point out that the underground man believes that consciousness and intellect lead to inertia. Whereas

Leonardo is shown not to hold such beliefs, the result of his consciousness and intellect tend to support the underground man's contentions.

Merezhkovsky in Resurrection of the Gods incorporates Dostoevsky's faith in God and his idea of man-god into the character of Leonardo da Vinci. In Merezhkovsky's novel the artist in certain respects resembles Alyosha Karamazov who directs humanity to god's light shining through the darkness. Nevertheless, Leonardo, despite his seeming synthesis of Christianity and paganism, good and evil, is incapable of rendering good to his fellow humans. Whereas Alyosha actively brings about good, Leonardo withdraws into his own inner world away from life's vibrant flow.

Again Merezhkovsky has endeavored to fuse the concepts of Christianity and paganism, good and evil, into one of his historical figures, in this case, Leonardo da Vinci. He has endowed Leonardo with knowledge through which he becomes equal with Christ in his respect for all life.

Dostoevsky regarded knowledge as the basis of evil. As we have observed in Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov the combined tyranny of will and intellect often deteriorate into evil deeds. Sonya reveals the spiritual power of faith. Faith leads to God. In this way, through faith, the individual perceives good. According to Dostoevsky, when knowledge becomes the sole basis of people's love for God and his creations, life comes to a halt. Good makes its appearance when the human soul humbly accepts God's

wisdom as the foundation of human existence. Shestov in "Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky" states that knowledge often alienates people from their very roots: ". . . knowledge does not make a man equal to God, but tears him away from God, putting him in the clutches of a dead and deadening 'truth'".[4] Indeed, this befalls Leonardo, who eventually sees the hopelessness of his situation and realizes that his actions are doomed to chaos and nothingness.

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[4] L. Shestov, "Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky", translated by Elinor Hewitt (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969), p. 12. This is a translation of "Kirkegaard i Dostoevskii" which was unavailable in the original.

CHAPTER VI

PETER AND ALEXIS

In the final novel of Merezhkovsky's trilogy, Peter and Alexis, the struggle between good and evil, Christianity and paganism, Christ and Antichrist reaches its culmination. Here Merezhkovsky focuses his attention upon the era of Peter the Great. Both Dostoevsky and Merezhkovsky found this period of Russian history fascinating. Dostoevsky says of the time: "'vsia Rossiia stoit na kakoi-to okonchatel'noi tochke, koleblias' nad bezdnoiu.'"[1] In this period arbitrary will and rationalism are seen to predominate. People are uprooted and torn from their cultural heritage. It is a period of Antichrist, the man-god. Berdiaev writes of Dostoevsky's interest in Peter's reforms:

> Dostoevskii ne sklonen uzhe iskliuchitel'no idealizirovat' dopetrovskuiu Rus'. On pridaet ogromnoe znachenie Peterburgu, Petrovskomu periodu russkoi istorii. On pisatel' etogo perioda. Ego interesuet sud'ba cheloveka v peterburgskoi, petrovskoi Rossii, slozhnyi tragicheskii opyt russkogo skital'tsa, otorvavshegosia ot rodnoi pochvy v etot period.[2]

Merezhkovsky envisions the historical figures of Alexis and his father as embodying good and evil, Christ and Antichrist. Alexis serves as the symbol of the Old

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[1] Cited from D. Merezhkovskii, Tolstoi i Dostoevsky in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, op. cit., Vol. 9, p. ix.

[2] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, op. cit., p. 176.

Believers who despite opposition maintain a devout faith in God and Russian Orthodoxy. Peter, on the other hand, is shown to represent Antichrist in his despotic effort to redirect Russian destiny. The association of Peter with Antichrist is directly brought out by the title of the trilogy Christ and Antichrist and also by the full title of the novel itself Antichrist: Peter and Alexis. Furthermore Book II within the work is devoted to Peter and entitled "Antichrist". Thus it seems as if the author-narrator figure is committing himself to the viewpoint that Peter represents Antichrist and Alexis Christ. However, this is something of an oversimplification for even though Peter represents the principle of Antichrist, he does manifest duality, i.e., Christian humility and pagan daring. He himself is unaware of his dual nature which exhibits both kindly and savage characteristics! Often the latter dominate. He throws drunken parties or "orgies". At the same time Peter enjoys the singing and merriment, he becomes sadistic, forcing his guests to drink until they become inebriated to the point of madness. Then they engage in quarrelsome fights. If an individual expresses an aversion towards a certain food or drink, Peter ties him down and forcefully administers the hated object. While leading people into a state of despair, Peter experiences a perverse satisfaction. Fraulein Arnheim witnesses such a drunken brawl and describes it in her diary as follows:

> U menia v glazakh temnelo; inogda ia pochti teriala soznanie. Chelovecheskie litsa kazalis' kakimi-to zverinymi mordami, i strashnee vsekh bylo litso tsaria--shirokoe, krugloe, s nemnogo kosym razrezom bol'shikh, vypuklykh, tochno vypuchennykh glaz, s torchashchimi kverkhu ostrymi usikami--litso ogromnoi khishchnoi koshki ili tigra. Ono bylo spokoino i nasmeshlivo. Vzor iasen i pronitsatelen. On odin byl trezv i s liubopytstvom zagliadyval v samye gnusnye tainy, obnazhennye vnutrennosti chelovecheskikh dush, kotorye vyvorachivalis' pered nim naiznanku v etom zastenke, gde orudiem pytki bylo vino.[3]

Peter's relationship to the Russian nation and his family also reveals his dual nature. Whereas Peter fears such tiny insects as cockroaches he tortures and executes men who oppose his reign. He feels no guilt while chopping off traitors' heads. However, he can shed tears while his wife rocks and comforts him. He loves his wife and the majority of his children with the special exception of Alexis for whom he often feels a murderous hatred. People who, like Alexis, oppose him suffer dearly. Dokukin, an innocuous Old Believer, in the midst of a church service, calls Peter the Antichrist. Peter is so infuriated that he tortures and executes Dokukin. Alexis identifies his father's cruelty with Peter's terrible double which takes on the image of a werewolf. Alexis longs to love his father, but is frightened by the assertion of the latter's savage will:

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[3] D. Merezkhovskii, Antikhrist: Petr i Aleksei in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, Vol. 4, III, i, 117-8. Hereinafter cited as P.A.

> Aleksei protianul ruki, kak budto zashchishchaias' ot smertel'nogo udara, podnial vzor i uvidel nad soboi v takom zhe bystrom, kak namedni, no teper' uzhe obratnom, prevrashchenii oborotnia, vmesto rodnogo litsa, to drugoe, chuzhdoe, strashnoe, kak mertvaia maska--litso zveria. (P.A., VIII, ii, 119)

The manifestation of Peter's will leads to the tyranny of reason and Western technology. He wishes to introduce rationality and Western-based conformity into Russian society. Into a land permeated with worship of miracle and tradition, Peter strives to bring the new and orderly. However, he imitates the styles and philosophies of Western Europe without fully comprehending them.

Saint Petersburg is the epitome of Peter's designs and the embodiment of his will. It is Peter's city and is constructed according to Western Europeon models. It is built on a rational plan of streets systematically meeting at right angles and bisecting at uniform intervals. Lines are designated so that no house is permitted to bypass a certain point.[4]

In his zeal to build Saint Petersburg, Peter defies the natural elements. He constructs his great city on a muddy swamp which floods over at least every five years. Peter wishes to demonstrate to his people that rationality

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[4]Paradoxically, in Crime and Punishment, this city founded upon reason and order is now chaotic. Here the practical implications of will, reason and knowledge deteriorating into chaos come to the forefront.

is the basis of a nation's greatness. Similarly, Julian the Apostate had struggled to restore paganism into a fundamentally Christian society. Both Peter and Julian attempt what many thinkers thought to be impossible. Peter, unlike Julian, succeeds. Saint Petersburg survives in spite of the people's curses, dire predictions and a flood. Peter's city lives in the face of all antagonism.

Peter's plans are in opposition to both natural phenomena and his subject's hopes and dreams. He hopes to do "good" and improve Russian life by building it upon science and rationalism which is identified with force in the novel. Fraulein Arnheim quotes in her diary the words of Pleier:

> --Moskovity, --skazal Pleier, --delaiut vse po prinuzhdeniiu, a umri tsar'[Peter, C.A.] i proshchai nauka! Rossiia--strana, gde vse nachinaiut i nichego ne okanchivaiut. Na nee deistvuet tsar', kak krepkaia vodka na zhelezo. Nauku v poddannykh svoikh vbivaet batogami i palkami, po russkoi poslovitse: . . . 'net togo sporee, chto kulakom po shee'. (P.A., III, i, 143-4)

Fraulein Arnheim further adds:

> A russkii tzar' [Peter, C.A.], po samoi prirode vlasti svoei--despot, i emu nuzhny raby. Vot pochemu userdno vvodit on v narod tsifir, navigatsiiu, fortifikatsiiu i prochie nizshie prikladnye znaniia, no nikogda ne dopustit svoikh poddannykh do istinnogo prosveshcheniia, kotoroe trebuet svobody. (P.A., III, i, 144)

Peter's reforms are characterized above all by force and cruelty. Unlike Julian, he does not use reason and discussion to persuade the people of the virtues of his

reforms. From the beginning of his campaign to introduce rationalism Peter employs flogging, torture and execution.

Peter strives to become a man-god. In his cruelty he oversteps the bounds of good and evil. He reminds us of Cesare Borgia, Raskolnikov's "moral superman" and Ivan Karamazov's theoretical person to whom everything is permitted. Whereas Leonardo da Vinci both respects and reconciles good and evil, Peter rises above them. He differs from Leonardo in that his abiding desire is not so much to gain further knowledge, but to transform his knowledge into action. This contrast is brought out by a God-seeking character, Tichon Zapolsky, who has a dream in which he sees the faces of both Leonardo and Peter: "V oboikh litsakh bylo chto-to obshchee, kak by protivopolozhno-podobnoe: v odnom--velikoe sozertsanie, v drugom--velikoe deistvie razuma" (P.A., IX, iv, 185).

The Russian people experience great difficulty in accepting Peter's reforms. Despite Peter's coercion they cannot be reconciled with western reason and technology. They can only relate well to tradition. Reason and technology are completely foreign to a nation steeped in worship of miracle and saints. The sudden transformation of the foundation of a people's existence is absurd. It runs counter to that organic development (pochvennichestvo) which Dostoevsky had championed as the vital, driving force of a nation. His antipathy to the "rationally" imposed Westernization of Russia is evident in the underground man's disparaging remarks concerning the modern "westernized"

man as ". . . chelovek tronutyi razvitiem i evropeiskoi tsivilizatsiei stonet, kak chelovek' . . . otrevivshiisia ot pochvy i ot narodnykh nachal, . . . (Z.I.P., I, iv, 144). Berdiaev further ellaborates upon Dostoevsky's views concerning forceful introduction of reforms into a nation's midst. Berdiaev presents three solutions to the harmony and "collective good" towards which Peter directed the Russian nation:

> Vozmozhny tri resheniia voprosa o mirovoi garmonii, o rae, ob okonchatel'nom torzhestve dobra: 1) garmoniia, rai, zhizn' v dobre bez svobody izbraniia, bez mirovoi tragedii, bez stradaniia i tvorcheskogo truda; 2) garmonia, rai, zhizn' v dobre na vershine zemnoi istorii, kuplennaia tsenoi neischisliaemykh stradanii i slez vsekh obrechennykh na smert' chelovecheskikh pokolenii, prevrashchennykh v sredstvo dlia griadushchikh schastlivtsev [Peter's solution, C.A.]; 3) garmoniia, rai, zhizn' v dobre, k kotorym prikhodit chelovek cherez svobodu i stradanie v plane, v kotoryi voidut vse kogda-libo zhivshie i stradavshie, t. e. v Tsarstve Bozh'em. Dostoevskii reshitel'no otvergaet pervye dva resheniia voprosa o mirovoi garmonii i rae i priemlet tol'ko tret'e reshenie.[5]

Merezhkovsky, like Dostoevsky, viewed humankind's development as based upon freedom to choose God when confronted by evil. Peter, however, in his effort to assert his will and do "good" ignores Christ. Furthermore, his success is more illusive than real. The Russian people only go through the motions of acting rationally and Peter's great city, Saint Petersburg, exhibits artificiality and ostentation.

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[5] N. Berdiaev, Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo, p. 156.

That Peter must overcome innumerable obstacles in order to bring reason into Russia is demonstrated by the statue, Aphrodite. It is like the statue which Leonardo da Vinci measured with his instruments in Italy. Peter brought it to Saint Petersburg and placed it in the Summer Gardens. The narrator describes Russia as a land bordering on confusion and nothingness:

> S togo samogo dnia, kak vyshla, iz tysiacheletnei mogily svoei, tam, vo Florentsii,--shla ona vse dal'she i dal'she, iz veka v vek, iz naroda v narod, nigde ne ostanavlivaias', poka, nakonets, v pobedonosnom shestvii, ne dostigla poslednkikh predelov zemli--Giperboreiskoi Skifii, za kotoroi uzhe net nichego, krome nochi i khaosa. (P.A., I, iii, 31)

Whereas Peter incorporates the principle of Antichrist and the denial of freedom of spirit, Alexis resembles Christ. Within the novel and from the standpoint of the Old Believers he represents Russia's salvation from eternal damnation. The way in which Merezhkovsky portrays Alexis reminds us of Solovev's "Sophia". In Solovev's philosophy Sophia serves as the medium between humanity and God. Peter Zouboff in his introduction to Solovev's Chtenie o Bogochelovechestve (Lectures on Godmanhood) discusses Solovev's attempt to synthesize God and humanity spiritually. He writes:

> That synthesis is expressed in the concept of the Godmanhood of Christ, who is the only link between the ineffable God and the phenomenal world of man--acting in man through the medium of the 'world-soul' or Sophia--and who is to receive unto Himself all redeemed humanity and the

> whole transfigured universe: the 'Son of Man' in whom 'dwelleth the fullness of God'.[6]

In the novel Alexis also links the soul with Divinity. The Old Believers regard Alexis as their bond with the Lord. Dokukin, an Old Believer, begs Alexis to purge Russia of the Antichrist, Peter. He cries out to Alexis for compassion.

> --Smiluisia, batiushka! Poslushai nas, bednykh, vopiushchikh, poslednikh rabov tvoikh! Poradei za veru khristianskuiu, . . . Ei, gosudar', tsarevich, [Alexis, C.A.] ditiatko krasnoe, tserkovnoe, solnyshko u nashe, nadezhda Rossiiskaia! Toboi khochet ves' mir prosvetit'sia, o tebe liudi Bozhii rastochennye raduiutsia! Esli ne ty po Gospode Boge, kto nam pomozhet? Propali, propali my vse bez tebia, rodnyi! Smiluisia! (P.A., I, i, 11)

Peter and Alexis experience a symbiotic relationship in which one character serves as foil to the other and each desires the death of the other. Whereas both father and son exhibit Christian humility and pagan daring the former dominates Alexis and the latter Peter. Thus despite Alexis' Christ-like features he, as Ivan Karamazov, becomes an intellectual parricide. Despite their opposing traits, the contradictory fragments of their nature often fuse into one entity. The narrator says of them when they engage in verbal battle:

> Maska protiv maski--i v obeikh vnezapnoe, strannoe, kak budto prizrachnoe, skhodstvo--

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[6] P. Zouboff, Introduction to: V. Solovev, Lectures on Godmanhood (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1948), p. 39.

> v protivopolozhnostiakh podob'e. Kak budto shirokoe, krugloe, pukhloe litso Petra, otrazhaias' v dlinnom i toshchem litse Alekseia, tochno v vognutom zerkale, chudovishchno suzilos', vytianulos'. (P.A., IV, iv, 228-9)

Alexis, as a symbol of the traditional Christian concept of good, is distinguished from Peter by the characteristics of humility and respect for the people. Will leading to cruelty and tyranny dominate Peter. Alexis understands his people. He wishes to return to the people their ties to their cultural heritage. He fears for Russia and its native ways subject as they have been to pernicious, non-organic cultural influences.

> Nam soboiu vsenarodnogo obychaia peremenit' nevozmozhno.
> Kotoraia zemlia perestavliaet obychai, i ta zemlia nedolgo stoit.
> Zabyli russkie liudi vodu svoikh sosudov i nachali lakomo napoevat'sia ot chuzhikh vozmushchennykh vod. (P.A., III, ii, 161-2)

Alexis further renounces Peter's reverence of Western rationalism and technology:

> Mne sumnitel'no, chtob podlinno vse blagopoluchie cheloveka v odnoi nauke sostoialo. Pochto v drevnie vremena men'she uchilis', no bolee, nezheli nyne, so mnogimi naukami, blagopoluchiia videli? S velikim prosveshcheniem mozhno byt' velikomu skaredu. Nauka v razvrashchennom serdtse est' liutoe orudie delat' zlo. (P.A., III, ii, 163)

Alexis' aim is to allow the people freedom to choose their own destiny.

Conflict over religion eternally severs Peter from the people and in part leads him to murder Alexis. Peter

tends to ignore Russian Orthodoxy. He considers it to be based on miracle, superstition and tradition. He believes that the universe is founded upon reason and order. In his world there is no room for worship of miracle working icons, reverence for saints, or anything lacking logical explanation. He becomes Russia's Antichrist because he destroys traditional Russian Orthodoxy.

In his effort to stamp out Russian Orthodoxy Peter deems it necessary to destroy Alexis, the symbol of the Old Believers. Peter mentally and physically tortures Alexis to the point of despair. Alexis humbly accepts his punishment and in this way is shown to represent suffering. Because he suffers injustice and is murdered by his father he is allowed to divine God just before his death. At this point in the novel he encounters John, the Son of Thunder. As in Solovev's "Tale of the Antichrist", here too John represents Russian Orthodoxy.[7] He offers the dying tsarevich peace and eternal salvation. Despite Peter's hatred, Alexis at last enjoys happiness and God's warmth:

> I solntse voshlo v nego, i on pochustvoval, chto net ni skorbi, ni strakha, ni boli, ni smerti, a est' tol'ko vechnaia zhizn', vechnoe solntse--Khristos. (P.A., X, vi, 229)

John, the Son of Thunder, appears to one other person in the novel, Tichon Zapolsky. Tichon wavers between the irrational and Christ on the one hand, and Antichrist

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[7] See p. 10 of this study.

and reason on the other. He fears the imminent end of the world:

> "Vse ravno", podumal on, i vdrug nesterpimym svetom zagorelas' v soznanii mysl': vse ravno, kakoi iz dvukh putei on vyberet, kuda poidet--na vostok ili zapad; i zdes', i tam, na poslednykh predelakh vostoka i zapada--odna mysl', odno chuvstvo: skoro konets. (P.A., II, ii, 83)

In the end Tichon freely chooses Christ. However, he experiences disillusionment when he encounters various religious sects. He and Cornelius, an Old Believer, defy Peter's dictates and flee to a forest along the Veltouga. Here they join the Raskolniks. The Raskolniks hope to escape Peter, the Antichrist, by throwing themselves into a fire. In this way they seek to save their own souls and leave behind the representatives of Antichrist to perish. Parents throw their own screaming children into a raging fire. Cornelius and Tichon, however, escape death through a trap door leading to a secret chamber. Indeed, Cornelius repeatedly leads people to their death and then escapes the scene of the massacre.

The Raskolniks' actions lead Tichon to the brink of despair. He flees to Moscow and becomes involved with another religious sect. They indulge in sensual lust and moral perverseness. By acting in this manner they hope to escape the strict confines of the Russian church. A fourteen year old girl gives birth to a baby boy. The members of this sect proclaim the new born as Christ and attempt to sacrifice him to the Lord. Once again Tichon

feels revulsion at these people who assert their will and thus transgress the traditional concepts of good and evil. The above mentioned excesses underscore the necessity of attending to the negative portrayal of Christian figures in the novel. Despite Alexis's own Christian traits he is also depicted as a man who beats his wife and as an intellectual parricide. It is difficult to discern the author-narrator viewpoint; however, he does provide a negative depiction of both Peter, the Antichrist and the symbols of Christianity in the novel, e.g., Alexis and the various religious sects.

This intermixing of good and evil is perhaps less true of Tichon than any other important character in the novel. Tichon, in his quest for salvation joins a group of "runners" who maintain that to escape the Antichrist one must run to all ends of the earth. With them, Tichon comes to the Valaam Monastery in Lake Ladoga. He wanders all over the island. One day he encounters John, the Son of Thunder, the representative of Russian orthodoxy. John renders Tichon peaceful and obtuse as he did Alexis. Tichon is stricken dumb as he gives his soul over to Christ.

This is a culminating episode in the novel and as such is highly symbolic. Through it Merezhkovsky points out to the Russian people their spiritual salvation - Christ. By believing in Christ one may escape Antichrist. Dostoevsky also saw in Russia the potential to demonstrate to all peoples the road to an earthly paradise. Before Merezhkovsky made his appearance as a writer Shatov in Dostoevsky's

Besy (The Devils--1871) refers to the Russians as a God-bearing people.[8] In the preface to his famous "Pushkinskaia rech'" (Pushkin Speech) Dostoevsky states:

> "I say only that the Russian soul, the genius of the Russian people, is perhaps among all nations the most capable of upholding the ideal of a universal union of mankind, of brotherly love, of the calm conception which forgives contrasts, allows for and excuses the unlike, and softens all contradictions."[9]

Although Christ shows us the path to a state of true Christian good in Petor and Alexis, the expressly desired synthesis of good and evil is never achieved. Alexis and Tichon both surrender themselves to Christ's warmth and love, but it is necessary to note that they only accomplish such an act at the end of the novel. Alexis, Ilya and Tichon is stricken dumb so that he never makes manifest to others the reality of such a paradise.

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[8] F.M. Dostoevskii, Besy in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, 30 (II), i, 206-67.

[9] F.M. Dostoevskii, "The Pushkin Speech", translated by S. Koteliansky and J. Middleton Murry, (London: Owen Books, 1960), p. 16. This is a translation of the preface to "Pushkinskaia rech'" which was unavailable to the original

CONCLUSION

> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."[1]

According to Christian tradition, when man freely chose the forbidden fruit of knowledge of good and evil, he lost his innocence and became aware of evil and suffering. His precious knowledge led him to chaos and destruction. He abandoned his Creator who threw him out of earthly paradise and left him with the burden of the choice between good and evil. God's world filled with good and warmth disappeared. From biblical times to modern twentieth century society humankind has agonized over the problems of good and evil. In their fiction both Dostoevsky and Berdyaev sought to reconcile the age old problems of good and evil.

Dostoevsky witnessed much evil and suffering during his lifetime. When he returned from penal servitude in Siberia he began to understand what he considered to be the futility of socialist systems whose goal was 'collective good and happiness' based upon materialism. He felt that such systems did not bring about happiness and good. Rather, they were dehumanizing for they reduced the individual to

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[1] The Bible, Genesis, II, 16-17, Revised Standard Version, (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1952), p. 1.

a minute part of a complex machine.

In his quest for God and true happiness Dostoevsky sought to preserve freedom and individuality. He created a unique scheme in which evil and suffering came to preserve freedom and ultimate good. His ideal was for the individual to choose freely the path of good when confronted by evil. However, according to Dostoevsky, when the individual asserts his arbitrary will, he enters a world dominated by chaos and destruction. An examination of Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov and Crime and Punishment reveals two basic ways in which arbitrary will is so manifested: the first involves the harnessing of will to intellect, the second involves an essentially Promethean self-assertion. Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov created intellectual theories to condone the evil manifestation of their will, whereas Dmitri and Fedor Karamazov uninhibitedly relished the sensuousness of their lives. Ivan Karamazov and Raskolnikov by the crime of murder committed acts which violate the code of human morality. Ivan Karamazov became an intellectual parricide and Raskolnikov murdered two women. The evil nature of their deeds are emphasized by auxiliary characters, particularly Smerdyakov and Svidrigaylov. In The Brothers Karamazov Smerdyakov simply translated into reality Ivan's theory and in Crime and Punishment Svidrigaylov carried Raskolnikov's theory to such an extreme that it reached the level of the absurd. Compared to those of Raskolnikov, Svidrigaylov and Ivan the actions of characters like Dmitri

and Fedor Karamazov seem almost trivial. However, they are of crucial relevance to Dostoevsky for they represent the manifestation of arbitrary will which can lead people to a godless state in which vice and sin are rampant.

At first glance it seems as if humanity is hopelessly beset by evil. However, for Dostoevsky evil and suffering, though forces which work to undermine human freedom and dignity, can also serve to affirm goodness in God's creation. Only after the individual has experienced the true nature of evil may he best perceive good. Through suffering both Raskolnikov and Dmitri Karamazov experienced resurrection. Their acceptance of God directed them toward goodness and love which are products of faith. Once again, auxiliary characters serve to underline this point. In Crime and Punishment Sonya through intense suffering has recognized God and is thus enabled to aid Raskolnikov in his search for repentance and resurrection. In The Brothers Karamazov Dmitri discovered good through his own forces after he surveyed in horror the panorama of his past actions. He then gave himself over to suffering and faith. Alyosha Karamazov, under the influence of Father Zossima, witnessed and experienced evil, treaded the difficult path of suffering and was given to bask in God's warmth and love. He in his Christ-like humility represents good for he sought to multiply good on this earth through active love.

In Dostoevsky's world good triumphs over evil when the individual freely chooses good over evil and yields to faith in God. Good is equated with Christ, whereas evil is the manifestation of arbitrary will which is especially pernicious and devastating to human freedom when coupled with shrewd intellect.

Mereshkovsky took these concepts of good and evil and incorporated them into his trilogy Christ and Antichrist which traced the development of good and evil, i.e., Christianity and paganism, Christ and Antichrist, from the time of Imperial Rome, to renaissance Italy, and finally to eighteenth century Russia during the time of Peter the Great. In the first two novels it seems as if the author endeavored to reach a synthesis of good and evil based upon a reconciliation and even a coalescence of pagan and Christian values. This was done primarily through the characters of Julian the Apostate and Leonardo da Vinci.

In Death of the Gods Julian in his desire to reinstate paganism in a predominately Christian society, used traditional Christian concepts of humility and meekness. Initially he did not indulge in despotic cruelty in order to accomplish his goals, but rather sought to convert people by reason and example to Hellenism, which itself contained elements compatible with Christianity. During his lifetime Julian never attained his goals and in his frustration he resorted increasingly to force, to the arbitrary will of a manqué. At the end of his life he may

have come to accept Jesus Christ for on his deathbed he praised Helios, the sun god, the pagan counterpart to Christ.

In Resurrection of the Gods Mereshkovsky showed Leonardo to combine the antithetical traits of Christian humility and pagan daring. Leonardo expressed such a synthesis in his art. Furthermore, Leonardo resembled Christ in his vast knowledge. Because he knew all, he loved all. However, he never accomplished many of his goals and thus he and his contemporaries placed little value on his actions.

In minor characters it is also possible to observe various strains of a fusion of Christianity and paganism running through these two novels. Maximus advised Julian to unite the Kingdom of God with the Kingdom of the Devil and Arsinoe recognised the worth of both the pagan gods and the Galilean. Additionally, in opposition to Leonardo Mereshkovsky protrayed limited, one-sided men such as Cesare Borgia and Duke Moro as cruel men who acted according to the axiom "everything is permitted". Christian zealots such as the Grand Inquisitor, Savonarola and Columbus are shown negatively. The Grand Inquisitor and Savonarola became so possessed by a religious fervor that they lost sight of the true God and the goodness of the world. Only Columbus in his stupidity and ignorance accidentally stumbled upon something meaningful and beneficial to humanity. At this point Mereshkovsky has not yet realised a synthesis involving good and evil, understood in terms of Christianity

and paganism, the spirit and the flesh.

As we progress to the final novel in the trilogy Christ and Antichrist the concepts of good and evil are increasingly defined in terms of Christ and Antichrist. The problems of good and evil, Christianity and paganism are embodied in the essentially Christ-like figure of Alexis and in the character of Peter, the Antichrist. Whereas Alexis is shown to represent Christian passiveness, Peter is discussed in terms of despotic will. He is the Antichrist for in his destruction of traditional Russian Orthodoxy he denies the people religious freedom. However, even most symbolic representatives of Christianity are also portrayed negatively. They do not inspire Christian emulation or compassion.

Indeed, in this novel and in the trilogy it seems as if the conflict between good and evil is never resolved and the desired synthesis of the components of these concepts is never realized. Only at the end of the novels are various people allowed to enjoy serenity and peace. Julian, Tichon, and Alexis all found harmony, the latter two most assuredly in Christ, and were thus rendered happy. However, it is important to point out that this seeming beatitude occured at the time of death for Julian and Alexis. Tichon was stricken dumb so that he could not reveal his thoughts to anyone else. Leonardo da Vinci who perceived God's wisdom throughout the novel, never was allowed to enjoy such a blissful harmony. Perhaps

Merezhkovsky felt that only at death may the individual finally see the light and peacefully enjoy God's warmth and love. Whatever the intended message is through this final act of death, the conclusive solution involving the synthesis of good and evil, understood in terms of Christianity and paganism, Christ and Antichrist, is never passed on to humankind at large.

Both Dostoevsky and Merezhkovsky dealt with the problems of good and evil within a Christian framework. In the fiction discussed herein they both recognized Christ as the ultimate solution to evil. Dostoevsky as a seer of the spirit believed that humanity had to tread the path of evil and suffering before it could best experience Godmanhood, i.e., Christ. Merezhkovsky, however, wished to synthesize the spirit and the flesh which he considered to be bound up with Christianity and paganism. Dostoevsky showed people the tragedy of their existence when they indulge in mangodhood and succeeded in demonstrating the path to Godmanhood through traditional Christian concepts. Merezhkovsky by focusing upon definite historical periods sought a synthesis of the antagonistic concepts of good and evil. However, he did not in his trilogy show a viable reconciliation of their components: Christianity and paganism, Christ and Antichrist, the spirit and the flesh.

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